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Best Birding Spots: Part 1

TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

DEDICATED TO NATURAL HISTORY AND CONSERVATION

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Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club
Club des naturalistes d'Ottawa

TRAIL&LANDSCAPE

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Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club
Club des naturalistes d'Ottawa

— Founded 1879 —
Diane Lepage, President

Objectives of the Club: To promote the appreciation, preservation and conservation of Canada's natural heritage; to encourage investigation and publish the results of research in all fields of natural history and to diffuse the information on these fields as widely as possible; to support and co-operate with organizations engaged in preserving, maintaining or restoring environments of high quality for living things.

Club Publications: *The Canadian Field-Naturalist*, a quarterly devoted to reporting research in all fields of natural history relevant to Canada, and *Trail & Landscape*, a quarterly providing articles on the natural history of the Ottawa Valley and on Club activities.

Field Trips, Lectures and other natural history activities are arranged for members; see "Coming Events" in this issue.

Annual Membership Fees: Individual $40
Family $45
Student $20

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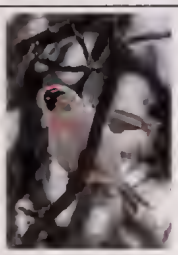

On the cover:
An adult Greenland (Hornemann's) Hoary Redpoll, Hilda Road, Ottawa, March 24, 2013. Photo by Jacques Bouvier. See "How to Find 250 Bird Species in the OFNC Study Area in a Single Year" on page 16.

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Photo by A. Bélair

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Christopher Ian Doris
Sharon Duffin & Family
Michelle Fairbrother & Family
Rhian G. Fox
M. Joan Freeman
Norma Gorling & Family
Oceana & Garth Gorling
Patricia Hotte
Christina Iannciello
Marianne Kerkhoven & Family
John King & Family
Erin Ladouceur & Family
Theodore Lukaszewski
Paul Matthews
Marian McLennan
Gregory D. Montague & Family
Rebecca Ng & Family
Sheena Parsons
Sam & Kathleen Pascoe
Hélène Pelletier
Gwennig Poirier & Family
Dr. Louise Potvin
Karen Prange & Family
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Bailey Wright & Family
Bei Xie & Family

Gatineau Area

Alicia Borisonik
John McDonnell & Family
Laura Kolnick & Family
Willem Nadon

Ontario

Jo-Anne Bélair & Family
Ken & Pat Hooles

British Columbia

Christine Rock
Thompson Rivers U. Library

Henry Steger
Chair, Membership Committee
November 2017

Longest Serving OFNC Members – *Ever!*

By Daniel F. Brunton

We naturalists *know,* as individuals, that it's important to contribute and get involved but at the end of the day, there's only so much time and energy to go around. Practically, how can one person really make a measurable difference without a huge commitment of time and resources? Well, it's surprisingly easy.

A really important contribution everyone can make is also the simplest: membership to an organization like the OFNC. Over and above the benefits this offers each of us – enhanced recreational skills and interesting information, enjoyable social interaction with like-minded individuals and helpful, frequently important literature – it makes the voice and authority of the organization's mandate that much louder. Individual OFNC members may not have the desire to read every scientific paper published in *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* (CFN) by various expert biologists, for example, but by our decision to be OFNC members we support the production of its nationally significant scientific and conservation content. That's huge. The important landscape protection achievements the OFNC has made over the years – quite remarkable ones for a volunteer-run, regional non-governmental organization – have been substantially based on credible, defendable scientific information such as that documented in the CFN. That success has only been possible, however, because the OFNC's conservation voice has spoken with such a large membership base supporting it. It is an effective one-two punch combination.

So individual membership is much more than just a decision to be part of something you enjoy – though that would be enough! It literally is an important, concrete contribution to natural history research and to the conservation of important natural landscapes in Canada.

Recognizing all this, the OFNC acknowledges those who have maintained memberships for exceptionally long periods. The listing of those individuals who have maintained memberships for 50 years or more has been published annually in *Trail & Landscape* for some years now. The most recent accounting

Figure 1: Dr. Henry B. Small Jr. was an OFNC member for 71 years. (Photo: Canadian Medical Association on-line archives)

(Steger 2017) lists 25 such memberships. While there are five former OFNC Presidents listed, not all are former officers and activists. Most represent field-naturalists from across the country who, quite simply, have maintained a life-long belief in and support for the objectives of the OFNC.

Fifty years is a long time to be involved in an organization, is it not? But for a number of members that record of commitment extends further still. For many years, the longest OFNC membership was believed to be that of Henry Beaumont Small Jr. (1854-1949). Small (Figure 1) was a medical doctor by profession. He was a Charter member of the Club, one of the young "whipper-snappers" led by James Fletcher who transformed the moribund Natural History Branch of the Ottawa Literary & Scientific Society into the OFNC in the spring of 1879 (Brunton 2004). He served in a number of official capacities, including OFNC President (1883-1885), and was elected an Honorary Member in 1935. He was a member of the Club until his death, a remarkable total of 71 years. Over their lifetimes, other OFNC stalwarts such as paleontologist Charles Sternberg (Russell 1982), botanist Herb Groh (Taschereau 1972), and zoologist Hoyes Lloyd (Munroe 1978) offered 66 years, 63 years and 60 years of membership service, respectively. Steger (2017) lists five current memberships that demonstrate comparable long (60-70 year) contributions, those being Yvonne and James Bendell, Charles Bird, J. W. Holiday, Ron Bedford and Francis and Joyce Cook. These folks represent an interesting mixture of professional biologists and keen amateurs. All are dedicated field naturalists.

Two names on the current "Golden Anniversary" list, however, stand out from all others in the 154-year history of the OFNC (dating back to its 1863 establishment as the Ottawa Natural History Society [Brunton 2015]). Stuart Houston and Sheila Thomson each joined the OFNC in 1943, which translates into *75 years* of membership service!

Sheila Thomson (Figure 2) and her late husband, Harry, are familiar to many local OFNC members because of their active leadership roles in many Club events and programs, especially during the heady days of growing conservation awareness through the 1960s and 1970s. They were activists in the true sense, passionately involved in conservation activities generally, and in Gatineau Park in particular. It was during this period that Sheila served as OFNC President (1971-1972). She is a mycologist by training and an expert field botanist by interest. Sheila has always demonstrated a high

Figure 2: Sheila Thomson, an OFNC member since 1943, in her natural habitat. Photo by Eleanor Thomson.

(demanding!) standard for scientific accuracy and environmental integrity both in field investigations and the application of this information. She remains a tenaciously active field naturalist. Despite the ridiculously high water levels of the Ottawa River during the day-long Field Botanists of Ontario aquatic plants field trip on September 10, for example, Sheila was undaunted in her participation. Movement along the swampier sections of the shoreline was particularly challenging that day for someone with reduced mobility, but she ranked amongst the most involved of participants (Figure 3). Her contribution to the regional scene probably cannot be better summed up than as expressed by fellow OFNC icon Ernie Brodo: "If I were granted the power to give a gift to each community in Canada, I would wish each of them a Sheila Thomson" (Brodo 1981)!

Figure 3: Sheila Thomson and the author (two members of the "Golden Anniversary" list) on the soggy Field Botanists of Ontario field trip, September 10, 2017. Photo by Holly Bickerton.

Stuart Houston (Figure 4) represents the other "nation" within the OFNC membership: the out-of-town serious field naturalists and researchers who especially value the nationally-focussed, scientific information presented in the CFN. Stuart, the dean of prairie field-naturalists, lives in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. He grew up and developed his passion for the study of nature in that area, along with other notable naturalists like writer/biologist Farley Mowat (Figure 5). A distinguished radiologist by profession (and Order of Canada recipient for his contributions in that field), he is an expert field ornithologist who has made extraordinary contributions to our understanding of raptors (particularly owls) and bird migration in Canada. He also is a noted authority on the history of natural history explorations in western Canada. Like Mowat, his fellow naturalist and life-long friend,

Figure 4: Stuart Houston, also an OFNC member since 1943, and associate. Photo by Glen Grambo.

Stuart has been a prolific author in these areas of natural history investigation as well as on various social history topics. Stuart's publications always reflect his belief in the importance of scholarly and verifiable application of his field findings. He also possesses, I note with raw envy, what is likely the only entirely complete set of the CFN – including the exceptionally rare 1880 OFNC *Transactions* 1 – in a private library in Canada.

In appreciation, we really should at least be offering both of these exceptionally productive and supportive naturalists a free subscription to the CFN, should we not? We could, except that in acknowledgement of their quite different but important contributions to the natural world, both have already received this, Sheila having been elected an Honorary Member in 1981 (Brodo 1981) and Stuart in 1985 (Gummer 1985)!

Most of us likely cannot hope to match such lengthy and substantial contributions to the natural world as those of Sheila Thomson and Stuart Houston, and for that matter, of some others who have 'only' been members for between 50 and 60 years! If their remarkable record of achievement inspires some of us to go above and beyond, so much the better. Regardless, however, it is useful to note that each of us already matches their contributions in one important area – as continuing members of the OFNC.

Acknowledgements

My thanks to Sheila Thomson, Eleanor Thomson and Stuart Houston for photos included here, and to Holly Bickerton for her photographic assistance and helpful comments on the draft of this article.

Figure 5: Stuart Houston in his library, amidst a pile of Farley Mowat books, May 2010. Photo by David Stobbe.

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Commemorative Plaque Unveiled for James Fletcher, Person of National Historic Importance

Daniel F. Brunton

OFNC founder James Fletcher (1852-1908) has long suffered from bad PR. He was brilliant, committed, inspirational and down-right loved by his professional and social associates alike but still, he is far less known than he should be. That's despite improving the welfare of thousands of farmers across Canada, virtually "inventing" the discipline of economic entomology, playing a pivotal role in the formation of many scientific and naturalist organizations (such as ours), and leaving a huge body of important documentation. The relatively low level of recognition of this pioneer scientist and naturalist probably is substantially due to his death at the early age of 56, with no one immediately prepared to champion his legacy. The arrival of World War I within a decade understandably also diverted everyone's attention from such matters.

James Fletcher (Frontispiece of Memorial Issue of The Ottawa Naturalist *22(10), 1909)*

Well, better late than never! In 2014, following a two year investigation by Parks Canada historians, James Fletcher was officially declared a Person of National Historic Importance (Parks Canada 2017). The PNHI initiative is an important program and has now designated over 2000 individuals who "reflect the rich and varied history of our nation" (Canada 2017). It is important that, as informed citizens, we learn of such people.

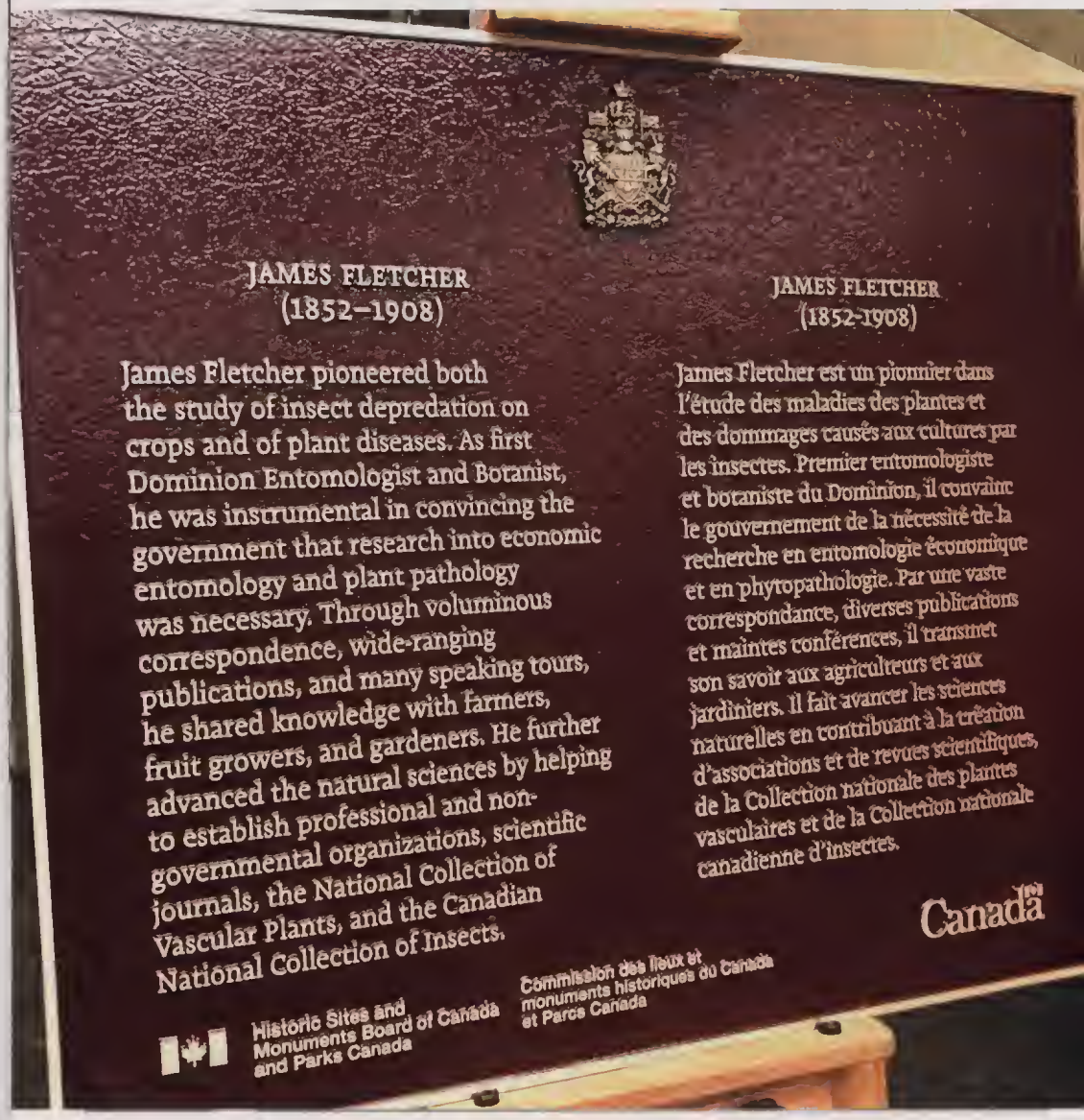
There has been a particular rush of designations this year. In part this is in response to the federal government's desire to honour, in Canada's sesquicentennial year, at least 150 individuals who have been important in the nation's development, and in part to a desire to clear a back-log that had built up over several years.

As part of the PNHI process, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMB) prepares and installs a permanent information plaque at a location appropriate to the person being honoured. On November 9, 2017, the official unveiling of that plaque for James Fletcher took place in the most suitable of all places – the Central Experimental

Farm ("The Farm"). It was there he worked for most of his professional career and where the OFNC's material memorials to him – the water fountain and sculpture and the formal portrait – remain, along the Driveway by the Agricultural Museum and in the Saunders Building, respectively.

The ceremony was presided over effectively and with humour by HSMB representative Dean Oliver of the Canadian Museum of History. Gilles Saindon, Associate Deputy Minister with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, spoke authoritatively of Fletcher's pivotal role in emerging agricultural research based soundly on his establishment of what are now globally significant collections of biodiversity specimens. Saindon emphasized how important these collections are in a wide range of on-going research initiatives.

The new James Fletcher plaque. Photo courtesy of Parks Canada.


JAMES FLETCHER
(1852–1908)
James Fletcher pioneered both the study of insect depredation on crops and of plant diseases. As first Dominion Entomologist and Botanist, he was instrumental in convincing the government that research into economic entomology and plant pathology was necessary. Through voluminous correspondence, wide-ranging publications, and many speaking tours, he shared knowledge with farmers, fruit growers, and gardeners. He further advanced the natural sciences by helping to establish professional and non-governmental organizations, scientific journals, the National Collection of Vascular Plants, and the Canadian National Collection of Insects.
JAMES FLETCHER
(1852-1908)
James Fletcher est un pionnier dans l'étude des maladies des plantes et des dommages causés aux cultures par les insectes. Premier entomologiste et botaniste du Dominion, il convainc le gouvernement de la nécessité de la recherche en entomologie économique et en phytopathologie. Par une vaste correspondance, diverses publications et maintes conférences, il transmet son savoir aux agriculteurs et aux jardiniers. Il fait avancer les sciences naturelles en contribuant à la création d'associations et de revues scientifiques, de la Collection nationale des plantes vasculaires et de la Collection nationale canadienne d'insectes.
Canada
Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada and Parks Canada
Commission des lieux et monuments historiques du Canada et Parcs Canada

The federal government representative for the unveiling ceremony was Minister of the Environment and Climate Change Catherine McKenna, who also is the local Member of Parliament. She spoke as one who knows and values The Farm, not just for what it does for the nation but as a vital city resource, too. She underscored how critical the baseline Fletcher and his associates laid down was to our current effort to understand and address critical contemporary national and global issues, such as climate change. She made a convincing and obviously informed case for the importance of both pure and applied research and cited examples of how Fletcher had used both for the benefit of Canadian agriculture. It was a grand thing, frankly, to hear a politician who obviously "got" the significance of the scientific values being addressed.

Minister of the Environment and Climate Change Catherine McKenna addressing the Fletcher ceremony. Photo courtesy of Parks Canada.

My comments at the ceremony focussed mostly on how this self-taught naturalist had narrowed the space between the worlds of professional and "amateur" science to achieve and inspire so many and so well. Fletcher blended the passion of individual, self-motivated Canadians citizens with the knowledge of professional researchers in a way never seen before in this nation and seldom since. And with remarkable results, it should be noted, that continue to pay dividends today. The benefits are not just from his research findings or from the rich specimen collections he made, which are used by researchers from around the world, but through his communication skills. Most significant of these communication contributions was his establishment of what is now Canada's premier natural history journal, *The Canadian Field-Naturalist*. Oh, and not to be forgotten in football playoff season, it was noted that Fletcher – a bit of a jock – was a founder of the Ottawa Football Club, the direct ancestor of today's Ottawa Redblacks.

After OFNC President Diane Lepage read the text of the plaque, Minister McKenna conducted the formal unveiling. Despite the early morning, mid-week timing of all this, there was an appreciative gathering of over 40 naturalists and researchers, as well as Colin Ritchie, the son of the late Thomas Ritchie who had nominated Fletcher for this tribute. The plaque will be installed next to the Arboretum (which Fletcher also initiated), on the south side of the parking area for the Fletcher Wildlife Garden. This is a good start in the proper recognition of arguably the most significant field-biologist of Victorian Canada. And, by all accounts, a pretty fair rugby player too!

Unveiling of Fletcher Plaque, Nov. 9, 2017. From left to right: Daniel Brunton (OFNC), Gilles Saindon (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada), Minister Catherine McKenna (Environment and Climate Change) and Dean Oliver (Historic Sites & Monuments Board of Canada). Photo courtesy of Parks Canada.

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NOTE: Thanks to Henry Steger, OFNC Membership Committee chair, who did yeoman service in helping Parks Canada assemble attendee and participant lists and who provided liaison between the OFNC and Parks Canada in the development of the ever-changing event agenda. And to Bruce MacMillan and his team at Parks Canada as well for pulling it all off in fine fashion.

The OFNC receives a big Thank-You from Students at Centennial Public School

Annie Bélair

On May 5, 2016, the OFNC sent a letter and a donation of $5,000 to Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) Outdoor Education Centres for the 2016-2017 school year. This was part of a new OFNC initiative to contribute $5,000 per year, for 5 years, to help schools attend outdoor programs at the MacSkimming and Bill Mason centres, using money from the Violetta Czasak bequest. Ninety percent of the donations would be used to rent buses and to cover program costs, and 10% would be used to purchase field materials.

An end-of-year OCDSB newsletter announced that OFNC's grant funded participation of 295 students in 2016-17. OCDSB gave the OFNC a beautiful picture book of the trips, which is now on display in the Fletcher Wildlife Garden Interpretation Centre. And among those students, a class from Centennial Public School sent the OFNC thank-you notes and drawings of their day at MacSkimming at the end of March 2017.

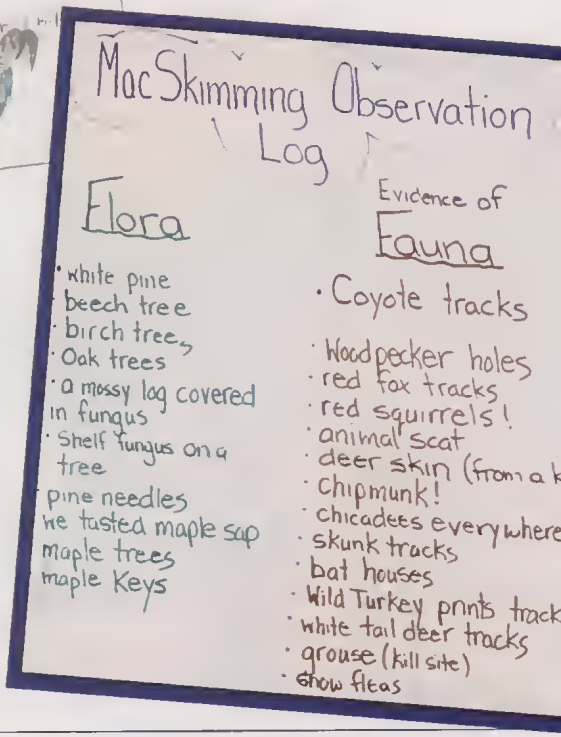
The OFNC Board of Directors is extremely pleased to hear that the children had such a great time, and hope that the grant program will continue to provide such invaluable chances to connect with nature.

Enjoy the drawings and comments from the students!

We found SQUIRREL TRACKS, and I found raccoon tracks. The fun part was my group RUNNING around the beautiful FOREST, listening and looking. It was very FUN, it was the most PERFECT DAY EVER!
Thank you,
HAILEY

I loved playing in the forest because it was fun running in the snow and having my feet wet. It must be hard being an animal in winter because they don't have any friends to help them get out when they sink. The whole day was amazing.
Sincerely,
Liam

I got to see a deer that was killed by a coyote, and kept sinking in the snow and laughing at myself. I also got to use an outhouse for the first time, it was kinda gross. We got to taste some maple sap straight out of the tree!
Cameron



Results of the 2017 OFNC Research Grants Program to Support Local Natural Sciences Research

OFNC Publications Committee

In March 2015, the OFNC Board of Directors approved a motion that the club establish an OFNC Research Grants program to support field-based natural science research projects in eastern Ontario and western Quebec. This new program aligns perfectly with one of the main goals of the OFNC: to encourage investigation, publish the results of research in all fields of natural history, and diffuse the information as widely as possible. Up to $15,000 is available for research projects each year. The funding must go to individuals, not organizations, and the funding cannot be used for salary. The research grants program is overseen by the OFNC Publications Committee. The call for funding for the 2018 field season, with a deadline of January 15, 2018, is in the previous issue of *Trail & Landscape* and posted on the OFNC website. Funding announcements will be made in the spring.

The Club's 2017 call for proposals was sent out widely in November 2016 with a deadline of January 15, 2017, for submitting a proposal. Four proposals were received this year. A small subcommittee, convened and chaired by Dr. Tony Gaston, reviewed all proposals and recommended funding all four of them. The funding recommendations were submitted to the Board of Directors, who approved all of them. One applicant subsequently declined the funding, resulting in three projects being funded. The following projects, listed in alphabetical order, were funded this year:

1. Paul Catling, independent researcher. Changing status of terrestrial snails in Ottawa.
2. Mary Ann Perron, PhD candidate, University of Ottawa. Are urban ponds good wildlife habitat?
3. David Seburn, Seburn Ecological Services. Identifying breeding locations of the threatened Western Chorus Frog in eastern Ontario.

As a condition of receiving support from the OFNC Research Fund, all grant recipients of are expected to submit a summary of their work for publication in *Trail & Landscape*, so stay tuned to learn about the results of these exciting and important local research projects.

Reminder:
The deadline to submit an application for a 2018 OFNC Research Grant is **January 15, 2018.**
For more details, go to **ofnc.ca** or see "OFNC Research Grants: Call for Proposals for 2018" in *Trail & Landscape* 51(4), Oct.-Dec. 2017, p. 180-181.

Pine Grosbeak, Clarence Creek, February 25, 2013.
Photo by Jacques Bouvier.

How to Find 250 Bird Species in the OFNC Study Area in a Single Year

Part 1: January to March

Gregory Zbitnew

In 1977, a series of articles in *Trail & Landscape* described a strategy to see 200 bird species within the OFNC study area in a single year. This is an update/rewrite of that series. Although some things described in those articles remain the same, much has changed. The resources available now have revolutionized birding. Also, some once-favoured areas no longer exist or are now rarely visited. Other new areas have become important hot spots. Some species have declined, and others are now more common.

HOW TO SEE
200 SPECIES OF **BIRDS** IN THE OTTAWA
AREA THIS YEAR

Paul Matthews with Richard Poulin

The title of the series as published in all five issues of T&L in 1977.

WHY NOT DO A YEAR LIST?

Have you ever tried to see as many bird species as possible in a single year in a specific area? This is quite a popular sport among birders. Although sometimes it can be a bit of work, it is actually quite a fun project. Aside from motivating you to get outside on a regular basis, it can be quite educational as you make efforts to identify more challenging species and learn about different areas to visit. If you can find a friend or group of friends to go out with, you can turn it into a friendly "competition" and a pleasant social event as well, and it is well known that you try harder if you have to keep up with someone else.

I need to make it clear that I have changed "200" to "250" only to emphasize what is possible for an experienced birder with a lot of time available. The articles are really intended to describe a strategy to MAXIMIZE the number of species you can observe in a year in the most efficient way. The exact total is not as important as is knowing how to do better than you might have thought, without spending more time. This strategy puts you where the birds are and at the right time.

From the time that bird sightings in the OFNC study area were first recorded, about 340 species in total have been found, and the current record for a single observer in a single calendar year is 267 species. This is quite exceptional, but many experienced birders have seen 250 in a single calendar year. This is possible because the OFNC study area is quite a good place to bird. While we are not located on one of the major bird flyways, we are very lucky to have the Ottawa River, which is an important bird corridor. The tributaries of the Ottawa River are also important in their own right. The river systems approximately divide the OFNC study area between the Canadian Shield and the St. Lawrence Lowlands, so there is a huge variety of habitat, and a good variety of birds. And, if you can forgive me

White-crowned Sparrow, Orleans, Jan. 5, 2012. Photo by J. Bouvier

for boasting, the area has a very active birding community with a lot of keen, skilled birders who are quite good at finding and identifying birds. The Ottawa-Gatineau area has, in my opinion, birding skill comparable to any other place in Ontario.

LAYING THE FOUNDATION

Do not think that your bird identification skills, by sight and by sound, need to be exceptional in order to see a lot of birds. Of course you need some, but there are ways to largely compensate for a lack of knowledge, such as using the services of a number of local birding guides, or joining some of the trips sponsored by the OFNC or the Ontario Field Ornithologists. Le Club des ornithologues de l'Outaouais (COO) also sponsors field trips. You also will find that the vast majority of birders you encounter in the field are glad to share their knowledge or give you a look through their telescope. If you see a flock of birders with telescopes or binoculars, be sure to stop by and ask what they have; you might just have a new bird for your list. If you need some bird identification help, you can ask those same birders or write to the email address on the OFNC website. Many birders take pictures of the birds they see, so by all means use this as an identification tool. All this is in addition to the vast amount of on-line reference material available.

The 1977 articles made frequent reference to checking the newspaper birding columns to see the latest news of rarities or other interesting sightings. These columns no longer exist. However, the OFNC does have a weekly report on its website, usually published every Thursday, which summarizes the previous week's highlights. An up-to-the week report of actual sightings is very useful, and this report should be read every week.

However, the very best tool available is an on-line database of bird sightings called eBird (www.ebird.org), and in fact most of the OFNC's weekly report is based on information from eBird. The extensive database can be viewed by anyone without cost or registration.

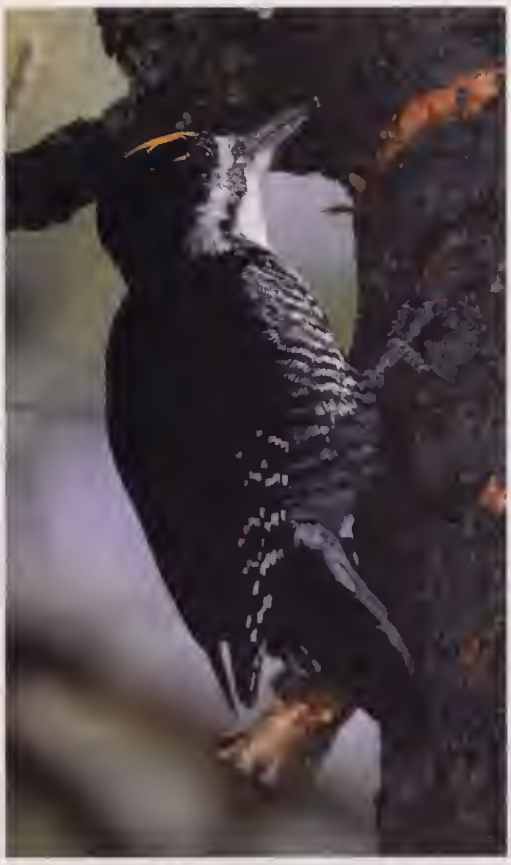
Let me digress and tell you a bit more about eBird and how it relates to the OFNC study area. The OFNC, from its foundation, has chosen as its primary focus the area within a circle of a 50-kilometre radius centred on the Peace Tower (called the 50K). Until the advent of eBird, the particular political region of the sighting was of no great importance to the birding community. However, eBird currently organizes its database by county, province and country, and there is currently no public tool to give information restricted to the OFNC study area. Ottawa and Gatineau are entirely within the OFNC study area. Other counties partly within are:

1. Les Collines de l'Outaouais
2. Papineau
3. La Vallée de la Gatineau
4. Pontiac (a very small part)
5. Lanark
6. Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry
7. Prescott and Russell
8. Renfrew (a very small part)
9. Leeds and Grenville (a very small part)

It is interesting to note that the way that the data can be organized and presented has actually affected how people bird, and as a result of eBird, many people now choose to focus a lot on individual counties in addition to or instead of the 50K. There is no right or wrong way to choose an area for birding, but if you want to use eBird for birding within the 50K, you sometimes may need to search by county.

eBird allows you to:

1. See illustrated checklists (by each week of the year).
2. See individual checklists of birds recorded by eBird users. If you are not so confident in your skills, you can use this feature to see what more experienced birders have been seeing in a given area.
3. See a map with all the occurrences of any species for any month or group of consecutive months.
4. See a list of the first and latest occurrences of any species, and, very importantly, to
5. **Receive an email alert for any rare bird sightings for all of the regions you have chosen, but only if you have signed up for a free account.**



Black-backed Woodpecker, Stony Swamp, Ottawa, March 8, 2013.
Photo by Jacques Bouvier.

This alert is also organized by county, province and country as well. The alert sends email notices for all species considered rare ***for the specific day the information was posted.*** So it would include out-of-season birds that are common at other times of the year. "Rare" for eBird is roughly the same as birds classified as "rare to accidental" in the OFNC publication "A Birder's Checklist of Ottawa" of May 1993, a PDF of which is available from the OFNC website, under "Historical Checklists" in the birding section. A simplified version of this (with a listing by season, not by week) is also available from the OFNC website. If you also use eBird to enter your own data, you can be alerted to ***new*** birds for your area, not just rare ones. If you have your phone set up to see your email, as so many do, you can be alerted to the presence of a rare bird within an hour of its posting. Ontbirds is another system open to anyone (upon request) to receive and send information on rare birds in Ontario, but 95% of these postings pertain to sightings outside the OFNC

study area. In my opinion it is not nearly as useful as eBird, but it does have the advantage of nearly instant news of sightings. The OFNC no longer sponsors a local rare bird alert, but there are now social networks within the birding community that supplement eBird and Ontbirds. Anyone who is active and interested in chasing birds will eventually come within their orbit. It might seem to be "cheating" or "riding on the coat-tails of the experts" to rely too much on the sightings of others, but birding, while it can be competitive in the fun sense, is also a cooperative community effort as well. As long as you alert others to your interesting sightings, you are doing your part. Unlike hunting for buried treasure where there is only one winner, in most cases there is no real limit as to how many people can see a rare bird. The "winners" take no special prize, beyond the fun of the chase.

The reader might wonder when we are going to talk about the birds. Please have patience! This is a long preamble to the most important single piece of advice, which is as true today as it was in 1977.

You should chase a rarity as soon as possible. The rarity MIGHT stay for weeks, but it is more likely to be gone the next day, or even the next hour.

The birding community has many sad stories of birds being missed by minutes.

These statistics may interest you:

In 2017, to the end of October, there were about 28 rarities seen in the OFNC study area. Of these:

1. 11 stayed for several days to more than a week.
2. 5 stayed until the next day after they were found.
3. 5 stayed to the end of the day they were found.
4. 4 stayed an hour or less (essentially only seen by the person or party that found it).
5. 4 were in private locations or the news did not get out in time for others to chase it.

So in the search for 250 (or whatever number is your target), 10 or more species may be missed if you don't move right away. That is a lot when you are pushing for high numbers.

Harlequin Duck, Bate Island, Ottawa February 1, 2016. Photo by Jacques Bouvier.

Bohemian Waxwing, Ottawa, March 30, 2016.
Photo by Jacques Bouvier.

Now before we get into the birds in detail, let's get an overview. It should surprise no one that some birds are very common while others are very rare. So the focus of any "big year" is to devote your efforts to pursuing the less common to rare ones. The common ones will be found just in the course of your many field trips or, in the case of the most common, they will be hard to avoid.

It is useful to classify the species by how common they are, roughly corresponding to the abundance status in the OFNC publication "A Birder's Checklist of Ottawa" of May 1993, which gives, on a weekly basis, the abundance status of birds found within the 50K. While this checklist has not been updated and the status of many birds has changed somewhat, you are strongly recommended to refer to it regularly; a PDF version is available from the OFNC website, under "Historical Checklists" in the birding section. It is important to know what is rare and what is common, in order to more effectively target your efforts. The "Ottawa District Bird Checklist", published by the OFNC in 2015, gives a list of all the birds ever seen in Ottawa, and identifies all birds considered rare but does not give the seasonal status. See the "Publications" section of the OFNC website to order a copy of this document. I classify the species as follows:

1. Birds that you are virtually certain to see in the year because they are either extremely common for a considerable period of time, or they are found in so many areas that you are bound to run into them. About 100 belong in this category.

2. Less common birds or birds with a more restricted habitat, a shorter migration window, or normally found only at night. You could miss some of them if you rarely visit some habitats or can only devote limited effort. About 80 belong in this category.

3. Like #2 but even less common or even more restricted habitat, or their migration period is rather short. You can easily miss some of these unless you make some special effort. About 20-30 belong in this category.

4. Like # 3, but even more so. They include birds seen most but not every year, and those that are seen every year or are residents in extremely small numbers. There will be at most only a few opportunities per year to see these birds. About 20-30 belong in this category. You will miss some of these birds no matter how hard you try.

5. Real raritics, birds seen quite a bit less than every year. Sixty or more species that are real rarities have been recorded in the OFNC study area (the 50K) since the recording of bird sightings began. While the odds are obviously low for any given bird, it is certain that every year a few rarities will be seen. Eight such rarities have been seen in 2017 to date.

6. New species never seen here before. These are the ones that really bring the crowds out. The number of ***potential*** NEW birds for the area is quite high, but in the last few years, on average, only about one new species per year has been seen.

This article will only be mentioning birds I placed in categories 2, 3 and 4.

There are just a few more general points that need to be made. Some of them may be obvious. Clearly, the more you go out, the more you see, and some people do go out almost every day. More realistic for the average person is once per week, with a few extra trips for chasing things. You cannot expect to observe 250 species in a year by going out once per week, but a very high number is possible. With limited time available, it is even more important that on the trips you do go on, you cover all the major habitats at the right time of the year, or you will surely miss even some common birds. Even among the common birds, some are more common than others. It would be difficult to spend an hour outdoors without seeing an AMERICAN CROW or a BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE. However, you could spend the entire year in a typical suburban backyard and never seen a COMMON GOLDENEYE. While all three birds are common in the area, COMMON GOLDENEYE is restricted to water from fall to spring. Even common birds are not always seen every single time in the right habitat at the right time, so multiple visits will often be necessary.

This is the first of 4 articles. The following is a tentative outline of the planned contents of the articles and the T&L issue in which they are intended to appear:

1. *(January-March 2018)* Birding from January to March
    a. The final freeze up: chasing the lingerers
    b. Chasing feeder birds
    c. Chasing winter birds
    d. Frozen fields
    e. The winter doldrums
    f. Owls do not always give a hoot but we should
    g. Spring returns and the east floods
2. *(April-June 2018)* Birding from April to June
    a. The rivers open
    b. The early passerines
    c. How green was my valley, or the spring flood of birds
    d. The shorebird bubble
    e. The river is alive with the sound of insects
    f. Late migrants
    g. The end of migration
3. *(July-September 2018*) Birding from July to September
    a. Summer doldrums
    b. Migration begins
    c. Longing for the shorebirds
    d. Farewell to the summer songbirds
    e. The ducks are back
4. *(October-December 2018)* Birding from October to December
    a. Welcome to the fall songbirds
    b. The waterfowl peak
    c. Looking for gulls
    d. Fall rarities
    e. Return of winter and the winter birds
    f. The Christmas Bird Count

As this is a series of articles, the author welcomes feedback; it may be possible to make alterations/additions to the subsequent three articles. Please write the author at sightings@ofnc.ca, as soon as possible before the editor's deadline for the next articles: February 1 for the April-June article, May 1 for the July-September article, and August 1 for the October-December article. The author is also interested in hearing of anybody's experiences trying to pursue a "big year" in the 50K.

Pileated Woodpecker, Hilda Road in Ottawa, March 24, 2013. Photo by Jacques Bouvier.

BIRDING FROM JANUARY TO MARCH

So now, on to the birds. This part nominally covers the January-March period, but it would be more accurate to say that it covers up to the time the snow disappears and the flooding in the east has subsided, but before the rivers and inland ponds open up completely. That could happen anytime between about March 20 to April 15. If you are unfamiliar with any of the places referred to in this article, please go to the OFNC website where the locations are described.

Another important piece of advice is to cover all the major habitats/areas at the prime time, if this is all you can do.

These are the key activities during this period:

1. Visit, as early as possible, the unfrozen parts of the rivers to see the rarer over-wintering ducks.
2. Visit local or OFNC-sponsored feeders, but especially areas or feeders that have had rarities/scarcer birds reported.
3. Visit the Gatineau escarpment and the larger tracts of forest in the north: Gatineau Park and Lac La Blanche.
4. Visit other large tracts of forest: Larose Forest (east), near Pakenham (west) and the Marlborough Forest (south). Closer to town, visiting any of the Greenbelt areas is the best substitute. From east to west, try Green's Creek, Mer Bleue, Pine Grove, Stony Swamp, Jack Pine and Shirley's Bay.
5. Visit the agricultural areas outside of the city, particularly after a fresh manuring.
6. Visit the Greenland Road Hawk Watch in early March to early April.
7. Visit the flooded areas in the east.

These are the important birds to target in this period:

1. GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE
2. ROSS'S GOOSE
3. CACKLING GOOSE
4. EURASIAN WIGEON
5. HARLEQUIN DUCK
6. BARROW'S GOLDENEYE
7. TUNDRA SWAN
8. TRUMPETER SWAN
9. NORTHERN GOSHAWK
10. GOLDEN EAGLE
11. RED-SHOULDERED HAWK
12. ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK
13. OWLS (10 species possible)
14. GRAY PARTRIDGE
15. RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER
16. BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKER
17. AMERICAN THREE-TOED WOODPECKER
18. BOHEMIAN WAXWING
19. NORTHERN SHRIKE
20. NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD
21. CAROLINA WREN
22. TUFTED TITMOUSE
23. LAPLAND LONGSPUR
24. HOARY REDPOLL
25. COMMON REDPOLL
26. RED CROSSBILL
27. WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL
28. PINE GROSBEAK
29. EVENING GROSBEAK
30. PINE SISKIN

Northern Shrike near Parc national de Plaisance, February 1, 2017. Photo by Jacques Bouvier.

Remember that for all of the birds on this list, there is no place that you can go and be guaranteed to see them, at least in most years. All require *some* work, but many require a *great deal* of work in combination with determination, persistence, imperviousness to cold, and luck.

THE FINAL FREEZE UP: CHASING THE LINGERERS

January 1st gets the listers (including me) out in droves, since all their lists have now reset to zero. There is a good and practical reason to do so, though. While most of the birds you see are always common, or will be in a few months, there may be a few rare lingering ones. In some winters, extreme cold and snow cover have not yet arrived by January 1, but will do so very soon. So you have to head out in the short period of time before things get

worse. For example, in the winter of 2015-16, two rarities (BULLOCK'S ORIOLE and SUMMER TANAGER) lingered into the new year, the first until early January and the second until early February. Also, from December 15 to January 5, many are out doing one of the five or so local Christmas Bird Counts or doing the scouting for them. If any rarities are about, there is an excellent chance they will be found during this period, so stay tuned. Of the "regular" rarities, CAROLINA WREN and RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER are almost certain to have shown up at some feeder in the area, but never the same one. TUFTED TITMOUSE is another rarity that seems to show up most years at some feeder, and usually it seems that the feeder is far from the city. In several recent years, one has been at a feeder in the Luskville/Quyon area. This is also the time to "pad" your year list with some birds that have, perhaps unwisely, decided to spend the winter here. Finding these birds is good for entertainment and relieving the winter doldrums, but has no effect on your overall year list.

For several of the past few winters, HARLEQUIN DUCK has often settled into the swift water on the Rideau River near Hurdman, or on the Ottawa River at Deschênes Rapids or Bate Island. Head there as soon as possible, even though last winter, one was seen from December to early May. Those are also the spots to see BARROW'S GOLDENEYE, but this species is less critical as there are normally a few every winter.

CHASING FEEDER BIRDS

If a rarity shows up, the chances are high that it is coming to a feeder, and the chances are also high that the feeder is on private property. Aside from visiting the spot as soon as possible, do remember the code of ethics and respect the homeowner's privacy in these situations. This has been a sensitive subject in the past, and overly enthusiastic photographers and birders are a reason some homeowners do not want to publicize their sightings. Feeders often also attract the smaller birds of prey.

CHASING WINTER BIRDS

Some birds are rather rare or absent except in the winter. Winter is the best time to find BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS, which may be scarce or be present in the hundreds. Over-wintering fruit is the big attraction for these birds. The Experimental Farm Arboretum is one excellent place to look for them, but any of the suburbs where there are lots of crab apples will suit them quite well too. NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD is actually a rare resident, but is mentioned here as it favours similar food to WAXWINGS but is harder to see as it likes to spend its time in thickets.

GYRFALCON is a rare possibility in any extensive stretch of open fields during the winter, and often follows the GEESE flocks in the spring. GOLDEN EAGLES overwinter in small numbers on the Eardley Escarpment (Chemin Steele and the vicinity). A trip there is pretty much essential at some point in the winter. If you don't see them early, GOLDEN EAGLES are also regular in migration. The best spot for observing migration is Greenland Road, just north of Thomas Dolan Parkway, from sometime in March until early April. For the past few years, informal trips have been arranged here on favourable days. This spot is also a good one for NORTHERN GOSHAWK and RED-SHOULDERED HAWK, but

every bird of prey can be seen here. NORTHERN GOSHAWK can be seen any time of the year in any very large tract of forest but is usually scarce and elusive. RED-SHOULDERED HAWK can be seen from spring to fall, also in any large tract of forest.

Two species of WOODPECKERS are almost only found in the winter. They are birds of northern forests, do not normally use feeders and are rather inconspicuous and quiet but not that shy. AMERICAN THREE-TOED WOODPECKER is rather rare now and BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKER is almost annual but not easy to find. There is no dependable spot for either, so the best strategy is to keep looking for reports of them. BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKER has been seen regularly in Stony Swamp/Jack Pine, but that may be only because that area is so heavily used. Any large forested area, particularly in the north, is suitable habitat.

NORTHERN SHRIKE is possible in any open area with low shrubs/small trees.

"WINTER FINCHES" are certain species of FINCH that, aside from being primarily or exclusively seen in the winter, are highly nomadic and are nearly absent most years, but some years are present in huge numbers. The number depends on the supply of their required food crops both locally and elsewhere. If their food supply is poor somewhere they will move, but if the food supply in our region is also poor, they will not stay. These species are HOARY and COMMON REDPOLL, RED and WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL, PINE GROSBEAK, EVENING GROSBEAK and PINE SISKIN. PURPLE FINCH is sometimes included in this category, but as it is also a fairly common nester in our area, it is not a bird that must be found in the winter.

As of the time of writing, experts are predicting that this winter will be a good one locally for all but PINE GROSBEAK. Northern forested areas like Gatineau Park and Lac la Blanche are always better, but in heavy irruption years these species will be found all over the city. CROSSBILLS rarely go to feeders, but the other ones often do. Always look for these species early rather than later, as the population could diminish as the winter progresses, and they will not likely be as numerous next winter. EVENING GROSBEAK actually nests in small numbers, but the best place in the region to observe them is now Larose Forest, particularly at some feeders in the west end of the forest. Other than that, northern forests in the winter are your best bet.

FROZEN FIELDS

Agricultural areas can be quite attractive for some species of birds. The hardest one of the regular ones to find is LAPLAND LONGSPUR, best located by scanning flocks of HORNED LARKS and SNOW BUNTINGS, which are attracted to bare/newly manured fields. The often elusive GRAY PARTRIDGE is the other species that frequents these areas; it is best located in the winter in small flocks. Corn stubble in the fields around Eagleson/Rushmore has been a good area in the last few years, as have some areas near Antrim and, in the east end, the area around Giroux Road. One new area in Goulbourn that was fairly dependable last winter is now, unfortunately, the site of a large housing development.

Male Southern Common Redpoll, Ottawa, March 24, 2013. Photo by Jacques Bouvier.

THE WINTER DOLDRUMS

Sometime in late January, birders will have seen most of the birds species present, and the deepening snow and cold result in diminished motivation. There is no denying that most of the forested areas are sorely lacking in birds. At that time of year, about the only thing to do is to keep monitoring the sightings for rarities, force yourself to get out, and count down the days to March. One cardinal rule is never to hope for spring before March, and keep the hope faint until the third week of March. Actually, sometimes at the end of February there is a mild spell, and there can be a noticeable push of early migrants. That was very noticeable in 2017. Although you would not see anything then that you would not see later, it is a big boost to the spirits and can create the illusion of real progress. Unfortunately in these situations, it is usually followed by a return to normal winter conditions, which also happened in 2017.

OWLS DON'T ALWAYS GIVE A HOOT, BUT WE SHOULD

Although the OFNC no longer reports owl sightings on the internet, we can give some general advice. Winter is an excellent time to find owls. However, there is no spot where

they are guaranteed. An OWL (or any other bird for that matter) could be here today, not here tomorrow, but here the day after. In most years, it is possible for SNOWY OWLS to be found in some of the extensive open agricultural areas outside of the city and, because they are less nocturnal, can be seen very early or very late in the day. BARRED OWLS are now more common than GREAT HORNED OWLS, and outside of the nesting season they often are seen in surprisingly urban areas, usually well hidden, but are often only located when they are being mobbed by crows. All OWLS are greatly despised by other birds. The two small OWLS most likely to be detected this way are EASTERN SCREECH OWL and NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL. These small OWLS are mobbed by small songbirds, so any racket by birds should be investigated for the presence of an often incredibly well-hidden OWL. By late March, most OWLS have returned to their nesting grounds and are best located by their calls. Five other species of OWLS are much tougher to find, or are usually rather rare, and either you stumble on them in migration or rely on word-of-mouth reports from others. These are SHORT-EARED OWL, LONG-EARED OWL, BOREAL OWL, HAWK OWL, and GREAT GRAY OWL. Just to illustrate the point, in March 2017 a BOREAL OWL was on a light fixture in the front of a house in Sandy Hill all day. As always, if you do spot owls, respect the birders' code of conduct. Do not stay long and keep your distance.

Adult Great Gray Owl, Parc national de Plaisance, February 1, 2016.
Photo by Jacques Bouvier.

SPRING RETURNS AND THE EAST FLOODS

Eventually, after a seemingly endless winter, the snow melts, and the key event is the annual flooding in the east, which coincides with the return of the WATERFOWL, most particularly the GEESE. This event is facilitated by local topography: some very flat farmland on a wide flood plain turns some creeks into temporary lakes for a few days to a few weeks. The principal areas are Bearbrook Creek between Frank Kenny Road and Milton Road south of Orleans, the South Nation River near Riceville, and Cobb's Lake Creek near Bourget, an even larger area. Timing is rather critical, so you need to stay tuned once the snow starts to melt in earnest. The movement of GEESE has to coincide with the maximum extent of floodwater. In most years the peak is between the fourth week of March and the first week of April. In the spring of 2016, an estimated 200,000 SNOW GEESE were seen in one flock. However, in 2017, the maximum flock seen was only about 10-20,000. The sight of so many GEESE is alone worth the visit, as it is eastern Ontario's greatest wildlife spectacle. Aside from that, the draw is the opportunity to find some rare GEESE and DUCKS. Small numbers of GREATER WHITE-FRONTED and ROSS'S GEESE are mixed in with the large flocks of CANADA and SNOW GEESE. This is also the time to find the uncommon CACKLING GOOSE. Among the DUCKS, EURASIAN WIGEON is the rarest of the regular DUCKS. TUNDRA SWAN also comes through in small numbers. Birds of prey are often attracted to either the GEESE flocks or the rodents that are displaced by the flooding. The hardest one to find is GYRFALCON, and SHORT-EARED OWL is a possibility, too. If you don't yet have ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK on your list, this is the place to find it. While you are in the Frank Kenny/Milton Road area, you may as well look for the SANDHILL CRANES, which are often seen from Smith Road starting in late March. There are usually quite a few more here in the fall, though.

One exception to the eastern flooding rule is that the best place to find TRUMPETER SWANS is Carleton Place on the Mississippi River when it is just opening up.

SOME CLOSING REMARKS

We have outlined the hot spots and times for these birds, but this does not mean that there are no other good places, or no other good times. It is just that these are the best areas and times and, if your time is limited, you should go there first. However, don't neglect inspecting any suitable habitat that is near your home or near where you often go. Rarities and just ordinary good birds are sometimes not at the hotspots.

One final note: remember that access to Shirley's Bay, a premier spot in the Ottawa area, is vital starting about mid-April, and requires that your OFNC membership be up-to-date and that you specifically request that your name be placed on the access list for this area.

Look for "Part 2: April to June" in the next issue of T&L!

The editor wishes to thank Jacques Bouvier for providing these beautiful bird pictures to complement the article. You can follow Jacques's work (Oiseaux EEO Birds) on his sites:http://jacques-miroiseur.smugmug.com/ and http://jacquesbouvier.blogspot.ca/.

Peregrine Falcons in Ottawa's West End

Tony Beck

We moved into the Ambleside 2 condominium complex primarily for the view overlooking the Ottawa River. We also thought it would be a convenient and secure location to observe interesting birds from the comfort of a balcony. We were not disappointed. In fact, the view surpassed all our expectations. Free of ice in winter, and active with birds all year, Deschênes Rapids is an ideal environment to see different species of birds that pass through our region.

As it turns out, we are not the only ones looking for birds from our building. Ambleside 2 is an attractive spot for Peregrine Falcons – formidable avian predators, specializing in hunting birds. Although the falcons have an all-you-can-eat buffet on the river, they frequently hunt around the high-rise buildings of the Ambleside area, often looking for pigeons.

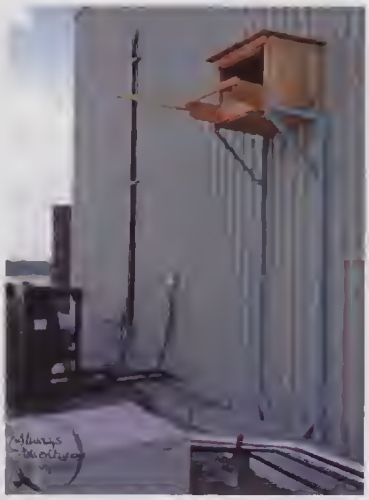
Since we would occasionally see a pair of adult Peregrines perching on our building, we suggested to our Board of Directors that a nest box could be placed on the roof. We're happy to announce that, thanks to members of the board, it's now complete and placed into position on our roof.

However, we still need to attract a bonded pair of Peregrines to the nest. Unfortunately, it was too late for 2017. Perhaps they'll take it for 2018.

The Peregrine Falcon is one of the top avian predators in our area. This powerful flyer holds the world record for fastest speed of any animal – 242 mph (389.46 km/h) in a stoop.

Once considered highly endangered and near extinction, they've made a gradual comeback. DDT in the food chain was considered the main cause of their decline. Thankfully, Canada banned the pesticide in 1970.

In 1987, I found an active nest on a quarry wall in nearby Bristol Mines, Quebec. This was the first known nesting record for our region in modern times. Now, these falcons nest regularly along the Eardley Escarpment, and also on a few of Ottawa's taller buildings.



The Peregrine Falcon nest box.

Their recovery from near-extinction is partly due to re-introduction programs and placement of artificial nest boxes, like the one on our building. They are part of a major environmental success story. In 2002, Canadian classifications downgraded the Peregrine's status from "threatened" to "species of concern". Not many endangered animals are lucky enough to get downgraded.

About the size of a crow, Peregrines are sleek and powerful-looking predators. They have long pointed wings with stiff and rapid wing beats. Adults have bluish-gray backs and upper wings. But, the best way to tell them apart from other similar avian predators is their distinctive dark helmet-like facial pattern. Young Peregrines are brownish for about one and a half years.

There are other similar species that patrol our building, but they usually nest in trees. The Merlin is an aggressive little falcon that sometimes perches on our building, but it's considerably smaller than a Peregrine. Although they mainly hunts small birds, Merlins will sometimes take pigeons larger than themselves. We also occasionally see Cooper's Hawks fly around the Ambleside area, but they have a different facial pattern, rounded wings and a much longer tail. They often take pigeons, sometimes capturing them in mid-flight, just like Peregrine Falcons do.

The Peregrines' natural nesting habitat is typically on high cliffs like those along the Gatineau Escarpment. Fortunately for us, these birds believe high rise buildings resemble cliffs. A pair of Peregrines defends a breeding territory of one kilometre or more but will hunt over a larger area if necessary. They will defend their nest, young, and territory against all potential threats including other birds, and even people. It's best, therefore, to minimize disturbing the nest during the critical nesting period – from late March to late July. If we're successful in attracting a breeding pair of Peregrines, we plan to set up a webcam, mainly so we don't have to disturb the nest during the sensitive nesting period.

Interestingly, bonded pairs are loyal to each other and mate for life. They'll return to their territory each spring. Females are always slightly bigger than males. Otherwise, both genders look similar. Sometimes pairs will spend the entire year around their territory.

Keep your eyes out for these majestic birds of prey. It would be an honour to have them make Ambleside 2 their home.

Eastern Garter Snake Molt 2017

By Peggi Calder

On August 22, I went to our outdoor compost bin and lifted the lid: there was a large Eastern Garter Snake lounging on top of the compost! I'm not sure how long she had been there at the time, as we had just returned from vacation on August 21.

A couple of days after, there were two smaller garter snakes accompanying her, so I assumed (which I know isn't always the best thing to do) that she was a female with two males in attendance, possibly courting.

Every time I took the top off the bin, she was calm and often eyed me rather curiously. Her two friends disappeared quickly down through the composting mass. Once she was looking over the edge of the bin, but never moved. I had turned the handles so that the cover sat up above the edge of the bin and gave some sort of space for them to move through if necessary.

On August 31, her eyes were clouded over, and I was worried that she might have gone blind. Users of NatureList assured me that it was a prelude to shedding.

Photo above: Garter Snake looking out from the compost bin on August 28, 2017.

Photo right: Cloudy eyes on August 31st.

Photos by Peggi Calder.

On September 2, the eyes were clear again. Photo by Peggi Calder.

By September 2, the eyes were clear. There was still a smaller snake with her who disappeared into the compost. At this point I thought that she must have shed her skin, but there wasn't any in view, and I wasn't going to dig down through the compost and disturb the smaller snake.

About September 7, I put cucumbers in (very carefully), and this was the only time she seemed agitated. She started to leave and hung half over the edge of the bin. Her weight made her fall out onto the grass, and I wondered if that was the end of the adventure.

On September 9, I checked and there was the snakeskin on top of the compost pile. It was approximately 29.5 inches long. Both snakes had left.

From the time of her cloudy eyes on August 31, it took nine or ten days for her to shed.

Snakeskin found on top of the compost pile on September 9.

Photo by Peggi Calder.

Dead on the Road

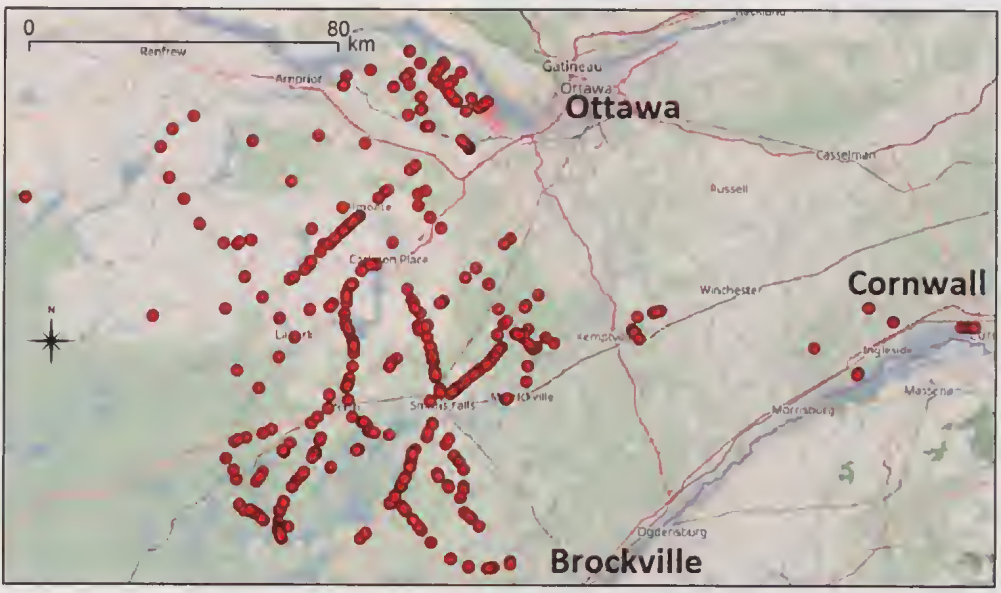
David Seburn

This article was first published on the OFNC blog, Field Notes.

Turtles as a group have been around for over 200 million years. They survived the extinction of the dinosaurs, but now they face an even greater threat: cars.

Most of the species of turtles that occur in eastern Ontario live in wetlands, like marshes and swamps. If the turtles remained in those wetlands they would be relatively safe, but turtles frequently leave wetlands. Some turtles make use of numerous wetlands over the year for feeding, breeding, and hibernation. Adult females leave their aquatic homes to find places to lay their eggs. Juveniles disperse to find new wetlands. In all these cases, turtles frequently must cross roads to get where they are going. And many of those turtles will be killed crossing those roads.

Given all that, conducting road surveys (driving slowly while actively scanning for turtles) can be an ideal way to survey for turtles. As part of a partnership between the OFNC and the Canadian Wildlife Federation, road surveys were conducted around the Ottawa area. The surveys were undertaken for two main reasons. One was to find new locations with the Blanding's Turtle. As a threatened species, the Blanding's Turtle and its habitat receive protection under the Ontario Endangered Species Act, so finding new locations can result in additional habitat protection. The second reason was to locate areas with significant amounts of roadkill, or "hotspots."



Red dots represent the locations of turtles found on roads. Fewer surveys were conducted in the Cornwall area.

We conducted 57 road surveys from late May until early September across much of eastern Ontario, driving more than 5000 km. For each turtle we found on the road, we collected the following data when possible: species, sex, size, and location (using a hand-held global positioning system, or GPS). As expected, we found many turtles on the road. In total, we found 584 turtles on roads, of which over 90% were dead. Our final count was 548 dead turtles, which is a staggering amount of road kill. Our total is also likely an underestimate of the amount of road kill, as scavengers such as raccoons can remove dead turtles before they can be counted, and surveys from a moving car will inevitably miss some dead turtles.

Most of the turtles we found were Painted Turtles, Ontario's only non-species-at-risk turtle, but 25% of the road kill turtles were species at risk. In addition to Painted Turtles, the other two commonly found turtles were the Blanding's Turtle and the Snapping Turtle. We also found a few Eastern Musk Turtles and Northern Map Turtles. We found 69 Blanding's Turtles on roads. On average we found 1.2 Blanding's Turtles per road survey and a maximum of five on one particularly grim survey. All of these observations will contribute to habitat protection for the species. Luckily, even observations of Blanding's Turtles on roads can contribute to habitat protection.

Our data on where turtles were found on roads will help identify hotspots where road mitigation measures should be installed. Road mitigation, such as wildlife fencing at road-kill hotspots, when combined with pre-existing culverts that can act as wildlife crossing tunnels, can reduce road kill at strategic locations but still allow movement across the landscape. Wildlife fencing can also make roads safer for drivers, as hitting a turtle on a road, or swerving to miss one, can lead to traffic accidents.

Until the time that roads are safer for wildlife, we can all do our part by watching for wildlife on roads and giving them a brake.

Turtles cross roads for many reasons – to find a nesting spot, to feed, breed, or hibernate in another wetland, or as part of natural dispersal. Photo by David Seburn.

The Pines They Are A-Changed!

Daniel F. Brunton

Damaged trees dominate the transformed landscape at Mud Lake after a massive windstorm hit the western portion of the City of Ottawa on September 27, 2017. Photo by Dan Brunton.

When *The Pines They Are A-Changin'* was published recently in *Trail & Landscape* (Brunton 2016), it described the slowly changing nature of the ancient pine grove that is the signature feature of the Britannia Conservation Area in west end Ottawa. Unknowingly, it also was documenting circumstances that were about to change – dramatically.

As it stood, the venerable giant White Pines (*Pinus strobus*) of the grove were being picked off one by one, primarily by winds storms. Almost imperceptibly, over the course of 50 years, the grove had been transformed from a woodland dominated by towering White Pines, with a developing Red and Sugar Maple canopy below, into a deciduous forest dominated by Red and Sugar Maple *(Acer rubrum* and *A. saccharum*, respectively) through which giant White Pine trees projected. Such is the way of things, however, in natural forests. The curious twist on all this was that the very winds that were taking down the big pines were also transporting seeds across Mud Lake and allowing the establishment of a dense young growth of White Pine on the eastern side. And, according to conventional theory, this new forest should be composed of vigorous, flexible trees much more resistant to the physical forces that were ever-so-slowly removing the ancient grove to the west. The old grove was effectively transporting itself across the lake and re-establishing itself on the other side as a young, vibrant, disturbance-tolerant forest.

The very long life spans of trees typically make the study of their life processes long, drawn-out affairs. White Pine generally live well over a century, for example, and some individuals have been recorded as being over 500 years old (Henry & Quimby 2007). So we rarely get the opportunity to see dramatic illustrations of forest renewal processes in action nor have the chance for a quick test of the conclusions of ecological investigations concerning such habitat.

The once-in-a-century windstorm that occurred in Ottawa in September 2017 provided just such an opportunity.

The massive windstorm hit the western portion of the City of Ottawa on September 27, 2017, a consequence of an immensely strong weather front moving down the Ottawa Valley. For a variety of climatological reasons, this one was exceptionally intense, and in some places it created narrowly confined, especially powerful and destructive elements known variously as downbursts, wind shears or, as they're best known across the Canadian Shield, *blowdowns*. These especially intense storm elements affect a particular location for only a few minutes and function very much like tornadoes but without the circular wind characteristics of those better-known events (Corfidi et al. 2017).

The September storm was exceptionally intense, with winds of up to 160 km/h recorded along the Ottawa River shore (Spears 2017). But despite the many downed trees, considerable property damage and the tragic cost of a human life, it is sobering to note that this was only a small blowdown! One that occurred in Algonquin Park, Ontario during the summer of 1972, for example, left a path of largely destroyed forest almost 15 km long and up to half a kilometre wide (pers. obs.). Indeed, blowdowns of over 500,000 ha in extent have been recorded in northern Ontario (MNRF 2017).

In only a few minutes, the Britannia blowdown gave us the remarkable opportunity to see the outcomes of what normally results from decades of forest change in such an ancient habitat. And it also gave us the chance to test our understanding of how, in contrast, a young and developing forest would/should withstand such an impact. That all this happened less than two years after ecological conditions had been documented and prognostications on apparent future landscape developments offered (Brunton 2016), makes a review of these recent extraordinary events all the more instructive.

Based on visits in October and November 2017, the following reviews the state of the Britannia Conservation Area pine forest after the big storm to document its present state. It also permits us to assess how closely the impacts of this spectacular event conformed to the conclusions and expectations described in the earlier (Brunton 2016) assessment.

THE IMPACT

The blowdown sliced through the southern portion of the old pine grove at the Britannia Conservation Area, crossed Mud Lake's Turtle Bay, skipped over the north side of Lincoln Heights Road while plucking off some branches of a few trees along the south side of the road in the process (including in my back garden!), then spluttered off in an eastward direction (Figure 1). While remarkably sparing much of Britannia Village to the west from extensive damage, it hit a portion of the forest west of Mud Lake with its full might.

This core impact area is contained within a broader band of less but still significant physical damage such as downed branches, broken crowns, etc. This storm track is about 400 m wide. At least one outlier of intense destruction is evident in the northern portion of the storm track (Figure 1). Such a discontinuous pattern of damage is typical of blowdowns: the impact is not continuous and bulldozer-like but undulates, with skipped-over areas and intense impact spots evident on a seemingly random basis within the broader overall blowdown track.

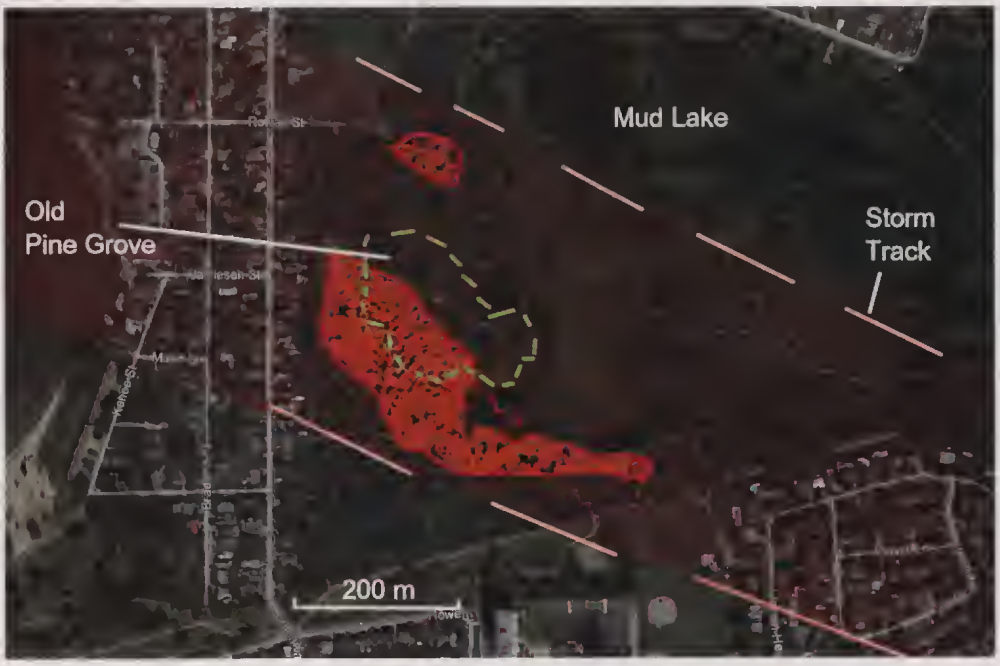


Figure 1. Map showing path of windstorm across Mud Lake, September 27, 2017.

The physical destruction in the core impact area is breathtaking. Figure 2 contrasts the west side of Turtle Bay as seen several weeks after the blowdown (November 10, 2017) with how it appeared 15 years ago (October 6, 2002). Startling indeed.

The impact is particularly starkly exposed after the fall of leaves from the associated deciduous trees, fully revealing the broken trunks of the former forest. Many of the great pines had been toppled, as were a number of especially tall large Bur Oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*) and Red Maples. Virtually every mature tree in an area ca. 100 m wide by 300 m long was severely impacted. Many old and brittle pine trunks were simply snapped in two, many well above the ground (Figure 3).

Based on ring counts on fresh-cut stumps of broken trees removed for safety reasons by the NCC's trail-clearing crew, it appears that some of these had stood for 150-170 years (pers. obs.).

During to the most intense periods of the storm, the shallow soil over flat sandstone and shale bedrock, saturated by substantial previous rainfall, offered poor anchoring for the widely-sprawling roots of the giant trees which had been forced to grow outward rather than downward. The exposed canopies of the pines captured the hurricane-strength winds only

Figure 2. Comparing photos of the west side of Turtle Bay: November 10, 2017 versus October 6, 2002. Photos by Dan Brunton.

too effectively and many of these trees were simply toppled. These up-turned spreading root systems now present startling, sail-like structures throughout the core impact area (Fig. 4).

Even though it was somewhat sheltered within the under-canopy, the only Bitternut Hickory (*Carya cordiformis*) tree known in the Conservation Area (in the southeast corner of Turtle Bay) was buckled over like a giant straw (Figure 5).

Falling trees also impacted smaller individuals that otherwise would likely have escaped the destruction. Figure 6, for example, illustrates a sapling of an uncommon Hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*) that was bent over and damaged by a falling pine.

Figure 3. Pine trunks snapped in two by the windstorm, many well above the ground. Photo by Dan Brunton.

The roots of the Hackberry are undamaged, however, so it will develop a new main trunk and survive … if somewhat the worse for wear.

All of this natural fury has had no evident short-term impact on the ground vegetation within the woodland. Although light levels and exposure were increased dramatically within the most impacted portions of the woods, the existing thin, dry soil conditions of the previous maple-pine forest vegetation already required that forest floor plants be tolerant of such conditions. Changes at that level will take longer to show themselves.

THE CONSEQUENCES

Old Pine Grove

The Britannia blowdown was catastrophic, but was not a catastrophe. Such phenomena are rare in human terms at any given location. Over the scale of centuries and millennia by which the natural evolution of forests takes place, however, these are not exceptional and indeed appear to be ecologically important events (Peterson and Pickett 1995). In much the same way the huge 2016 Fort McMurray fire was, in human terms, catastrophic, ecologically speaking, it was not that big a deal. Blowdowns are regularly occurring agents of natural landscape change. Be they fire, flood or wind, such dramatic natural events only become extraordinary when they occur in our backyards!

In this case, the most immediate consequence of the blowdown was the creation of a large glade within the developing maple-pine woodlands. There are individual winners and losers in all this. The individual trees that were damaged were obviously losers but other types of wildlife directly benefited by the creation of this opening. A tangle of ground-level vegetation, for example, was instantly created by the fallen tree canopies and large branches. Within days numerous White-throated Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos and other scrub birds were observed foraging within the formerly significantly more open and (for them) less appealing forest (pers. obs.). At the same time, Downy Woodpeckers and Black-capped Chickadees were actively investigating potential food sources amongst the broken limbs and shattered trucks. A Saw-whet Owl, a species rarely detected at Britannia, was observed sheltering within the thicket of fallen debris in late October (B. Di Labio, pers. comm.), quite likely following a night of hunting amongst that debris for small rodents that were, in turn, investigating newly provided food and shelter resources.

These adjustments will continue, with new short-term winners and losers playing their roles as the habitat evolves. Woodpeckers will excavate holes in the standing dead tree trunks (chicos) along the edges of glade, offering shelter and nesting

Figure 4. Up-turned root system of a fallen tree. Photo by Dan Brunton.

Figure 5. Merciless force hit the only Bitternut Hickory tree known in the Conservation Area. Photo by Dan Brunton.

Figure 6. A sapling (arrow) of an uncommon Hackberry bent over and damaged by a falling pine. Photo by Dan Brunton.

opportunities for a wide range of native fauna including Screech Owls, Northern Flying Squirrels, various bats, White-breasted Nuthatches, etc. The extra light will enable an increase in shrubs tolerant of brighter woodland edges likely including, unfortunately, Poison-ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*). And so on.

The New Pine Grove

What of those young pines that were forming the new forest on the east side of the lake? How badly were they impacted? Six days after the storm there was virtually no sign of damage to any of them; the crown of a single older pine that had established itself many years before had been broken off, but that was it. Figure 7 below represents a comparison of the east-side forest before (November 2015) and after (November 2017) the 2017 storm. The change in the state of this developing forest is evident.

Figure 7. Photos by Dan Brunton.

There undoubtedly were some signs of physical impact missed during the cursory early October site examination, but the overall invisibility of impacts and obvious toleration of these extreme conditions by the young pine forest was striking. Just like The Book said it would be!

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

From an ecological perspective, the woods both east and west of Mud Lake were not "damaged" nor were they "broken". They demonstrate how when all is said and done, even such substantial and dramatic change is already ecologically factored in.

The National Capital Commission, managers of this public landscape, temporarily closed the public trail around Mud Lake. That was appropriate and prudent, pending the clearing of the pathway, selective removal of dangling limbs and some precariously leaning trunks. They did a good job, ensuring public safety concerns were addressed but without interfering in the natural processes of the Conservation Area. Cut debris, broken branches, etc. have been left where they fell wherever possible. This natural material is thus available to contribute to ongoing development and recovery of the forests.

The forest around Mud Lake does not need to be "fixed" by humans. In particular, there is no need for any supplemental planting program. Indeed, introducing tree seedlings from off-site would likely constitute an ecologically negative intrusion into this unfolding natural process. Like natural forests everywhere, the woodlands of the Britannia Conservation Area managed their affairs very nicely for millennia without such "help", and they don't need it now.

At the end of the day, it is both enlightening and encouraging to see how the natural landscape here is already responding to these new conditions and opportunities. It will be interesting to follow that progression in the years to come. It will also be a fine Bicentennial project for some curious field naturalist in 2067 to see how the *next* half-century of Britannia's forest history has unfolded following the Great Storm of '17.

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BioBlitzing and Collecting at Lights in Larose Forest

Fenja Brodo

A crane fly on a sheet during a Mothing Night:
Tipula (Vestiplex) longiventris.
Photo by Fenja Brodo.

Larose Forest is a treasure in the eastern end of the Ottawa District, and it is a great place for enjoying all aspects of natural history. Several OFNC trips have explored this rich, second growth forest in various ways such as birding, mushrooming and looking for evidence of recent human habitation in this area. There have been four BioBlitzes held here, as well as five, very popular, black lighting events, two of which were part of a BioBlitz.

The main block of Larose Forest covers roughly 8,000 hectares (18,000 acres) and is a sand plain left behind when the Champlain Sea receded about 9,000 years ago. The terrain is generally flat, with only a few small ravines or gullies, and has some lovely marshy areas and some swamps. It is drained by both the Ottawa and the South Nation Rivers, and smaller tributaries. After glaciation, this area developed a nice mixed forest. Then, in the late 18th century, the huge White Pines were cut for ship masts. Later, areas were cleared for farming. The sandy soils, however, were no good for crops, and the removal of tree cover along with man-made fires allowed for erosion. Soil was blown away and the streams dried up or became intermittent. Farms were abandoned. Subsequently, the land was bought up and is now managed by the United Counties of Prescott and Russell (UCPR). Reforestation started in 1928, mostly with Red Pine plantations with a few other

coniferous species interspersed, but it is now a flourishing mixed forest of softwood and hardwood with a heavy shrub undergrowth and rich herbaceous vegetation. Selective logging occurs, Sugar Maples are tapped for their syrup, and the land is also used for wildlife and recreational purposes such as hiking, birding, snowshoeing, skiing and snowmobiling.

A development proposal for part of the forest spurred the organization of the first BioBlitz (June 16, 2006) to demonstrate the richness of the flora and fauna that would be destroyed if any development went ahead. It was organized by Christine Hanrahan, on behalf of the OFNC, in co-operation with the then Prescott-Russell Stewardship Council. Members of our Club, as well as biologists and students from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Canadian Museum of Nature, Carleton University and the University of Ottawa participated. A second, equally successful BioBlitz was held the following year on June 9, 2007, followed by a third on June 11, 2010. Each time the focus was in a different section of Larose Forest.

My interest is in crane flies, long-legged flies that are sometimes mistaken for mosquitoes. They are classified in the superfamily Tipuloidea. What used to comprise the family Tipulidae has been split into four families: Tipulidae, Cylindrotomidae, Limoniidae and Pediciidae, although not everybody agrees with this.

I have been involved in all the BioBlitzes organized in Larose Forest because I am interested in which species of crane flies inhabit this lovely area. Many crane flies are attracted to lights, so I have also been an active participant on OFNC "Mothing Nights." The results of all my crane fly collecting in Larose Forest are listed in the Table at the end of this article.

On the first BioBlitz, June 16, 2006, centered on Concession 8, I concentrated on the wetter and shadier parts of the area, along ditches, in small ponds or depressions and in among the undergrowth of ferns and wildflowers in the woods, collecting from 10:00 a.m. to late in the afternoon. Fourteen species of crane flies were my reward and one, *Eutonia alleni*, was new to my collection, so I returned the next day in the hopes of finding additional specimens but had no luck (Column A).

The second BioBlitz was held on June 9, 2007, a week earlier than the previous year and in another part of the forest, but among similar habitats. I netted 11 species, and eight were new to Larose Forest (Column B).

On June 7, 2009, I returned to Larose Forest with a colleague who needed fresh specimens for DNA work, and I knew from my previous collecting that the one species she was after might be quite abundant there in early June. Indeed, it was. We only spent about two hours in the middle of a lovely sunny day. We collected 14 species of crane flies in that short time, and eight proved to be additions to Larose Forest (Column C).

The third BioBlitz was organized in 2010, on June 11, in another area of the forest. This time, after hand netting for four hours in the afternoon, several of us set up black lights for night collecting. Of the 23 species that I collected, 18 were additions to my Larose Forest list and six of these (marked in **bold** in the table) were also additions to my list of crane flies of the Ottawa District. Significantly more species were collected at night (13); six were netted only during the day, and a mere four species were collected both during the day and night (Column D).

On June 15, 2013, Diane Lepage co-ordinated an OFNC Mothing Night at Larose Forest. Six white sheets with lights were set up before dusk, about 200 m between sheets. At night fall, the 30 or more participants moved from sheet to sheet marvelling, identifying and photographing the moths and other insects attracted to the sheets while I plucked off the crane flies. It was instructive to see that each sheet attracted a somewhat different community of insects, reason enough to have several sheets strung up along a path. At the end of that very long evening, and after several hours hunched over my microscope, I found that I had collected 18 species and that six of them were new to this forest's list (Column E).

Another Mothing Night was organized at the Larose Forest on June 21, 2014. Again, we had six sheets set up, but this time two of the sheets were lit by experimental LED lights created by Jim des Rivières and Richard Webster, with the financial help of a small OFNC research grant (see T&L 50(1): 7-8). That evening I collected 23 species, and eight of them were additions to Larose Forest (Column F).

A fourth BioBlitz was organized on June 3, 2016, by the UCPR and Christine Hanrahan, on behalf of the OFNC, in Concession 10, considered to be one of the most biologically diverse sections of the forest. This was beautifully documented by Christine Hanrahan (T&L 51(3): 141-145). I used my net to collect crane flies from noon to around 5:30 p.m. After supper, we set up our sheets and lights a short distance away from where I did the day collecting. There were seven sheets in all, including two different LED creations by Jim des Rivières and Richard Webster. These seemed to be more successful in attracting insects than the earlier prototypes of 2014. This was my most successful day of collecting crane flies in this forest. Thirty-eight species of crane flies were caught, nine of which were new to Larose, and one (*Austrolimnophila unica*) was a new record for the Ottawa District. Of the 38 species collected that day, six were only collected by hand netting

One of the prettier crane fly species that is common in Larose Forest and elsewhere in the Ottawa District, Epiphragma fasciapenne. *Photo by Fenja Brodo.*

during the day, 20 were only collected at the sheets at night, and 12 were captured both day and night. More species are usually collected at night than during the day, especially if we have multiple sheets set up. Not all species are attracted to lights and so need to be sought using other methods (Column G).

A Mothing Night was scheduled for June 2, 2017, and postponed to the next night because of a cold snap. In anticipation, I was in Larose Forest in mid-afternoon on June 3 and collected in and around a small wetland area. It was overcast most of the time, cool and breezy, the temperature fluctuated around 17° C and briefly attained 21° C when the sun came out. Only four species were found this time, but one of these, *Phalacrocera tipulina*, was new to my Larose Forest list, making it well worth my time collecting. This is a relatively rare bog species; the larvae feed on *Sphagnum* mosses and it belongs to the smallest family of crane flies, the Cylindrotomidae. The evening event was cancelled because of predicted plunging temperatures (Column H).

The most recent Mothing Night occurred on July 29, 2017, later in the season than all the previous events. Miriam Tepper collected crane fly specimens for me because I was out of town. Of the eight species she got, two were new to Larose Forest, and this brought the total up to 73 species. For comparison, 237 species have been recorded within the Ottawa District (defined as a 50-km radius centered on the Peace Tower on Parliament Hill). This area includes Larose Forest as well as more of the Ottawa Valley and a portion of the Canadian Shield across the Ottawa River in Quebec, and so is quite diverse in habitats.

Each time that I collected in Larose Forest, I added more species to the list. I seem to be a long way from assessing the complete spring fauna, let alone the species that are on the wing later in the year. Of the 73 species collected, 29 (more than one third) have only been collected once; 24 were collected twice; 11 were collected three times; 5 were collected four times; 2 were collected five times. The two most commonly collected species are *Shannonomyia lenta* (collected seven times) and *Epiphragma fasciapenne* (collected six times). The former is a small, rather nondescript species and the latter is quite beautiful. (See picture on page 49.) Its larvae are found in decaying wood.

Some species are quite restricted to a specific habitat and others may take more than one year to develop and may be scarcer in some years. There is much to learn about the biology and ecology of these species and that is what makes it so interesting. A 24-hour BioBlitz, or an evening of collecting at lights, provides an interesting but limited snapshot of the species that live in Larose Forest.

A brief history and description of Larose Forest was published by the OFNC in 2014. It is entitled *The Larose Forest: A naturalist's guide / La forêt Larose: Un guide du naturaliste*. It includes a map of the area as well as lists of birds, mammals, plants and a few other categories found in Larose Forest. The scientific names of all the organisms are given as well as their French and English names. This booklet is a great introduction to a place that is well worth exploring because of its beauty and rich natural history. It is sold for $4 at the OFNC monthly meetings and can be ordered online. You won't find any flies listed there nor the copious list of moths compiled by Diane Lepage, nor the long list of lichens compiled by Irwin Brodo and Troy McMullen. These and other organisms are in the complete database of all the biota recorded for Larose Forest and can be accessed at: http://www.ofnc.ca/conservation/larose/index.php. It is kept up-to-date by Christine Hanrahan.

Table 1. List of Crane Flies collected in Larose Forest.

Columns: **A** = 16 June 2006, BioBlitz, hand netting; **B** = 9 June 2007, BioBlitz, hand netting; **C** = 7 June 2009, hand netting; **D** = 11 June 2010, BioBlitz, hand netting by day (d) & black lighting at night (n); **E** = 15 June 2013, black lighting; **F** = 21 June 2014, black lighting; **G** = 3 June 2016, BioBlitz, hand netting, black lighting; **H** = 3 June 2017; **I** = 29 July 2017, black lighting. Species new to the Ottawa District are in **bold**.

		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	Tipulidae: Long-palped crane flies									
1	*Dolichopeza (Oropeza) dorsalis* (Johnson)						F			
2	*Dolichopeza (Oropeza) similis* (Johnson)							Gd		
3	*Dolichopeza (Oropeza) subalbipes* (John.)				Dn		F			
4	*Nephrotoma breviorcornis* (Doane)	A								
5	*Nephrotoma euceroides* Alexander				Dn		F		H	
6	*Nephrotoma ferruginea* (Fabricius)	A				E		Gn		
7	*Nephrotoma occipitalis* (Loew)							Gn		
8	*Nephrotoma punctum* (Loew)		B							
9	*Tipula (Lindneriua) senega* Alexander	A	B	C	Dd			Gd,n		
10	*Tipula (Lunatipula) bicornis* Forbes		B			E				
11	*Tipula (Lunatipula) parshleyi Alexander*		B							
12	*Tipula (Lunatipula) valida Loew*		B			E				
13	*Tipula (Ptere.) entomophthorae Alex.*				Dn				H	
14	*Tipula (Pterelachisus) t. trivittata Say*	A								
15	*Tipula (Schummelia) hermannia Alex.*				Dn					
16	*Tipula (Vestiplex) longiventris Loew*	A			Dn			Gn		
17	*Tipula (Yamatotipula) furca Walker*		B					Gn		I
18	*Tipula (Yamatotipula) jacobus Alex.*				Dn	E				
19	*Tipula (Yamatotipula) strepens Loew*		B							
20	*Tipula (Yamato.) tephrocephala Loew*			C				Gd		

Table 1. List of Crane Flies collected in Larose Forest - Continued.

Columns: **A** = 16 June 2006, BioBlitz, hand netting; **B** = 9 June 2007, BioBlitz, hand netting; **C** = 7 June 2009, hand netting; **D** = 11 June 2010, BioBlitz, hand netting by day (d) & black lighting at night (n); **E** = 15 June 2013, black lighting; **F** = 21 June 2014, black lighting; **G** = 3 June 2016, BioBlitz, hand netting, black lighting; **H** = 3 June 2017; **I** = 29 July 2017, black lighting. Species new to the Ottawa District are in **bold**.

		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	Limoniidae: Short-palped crane flies									
21	*Antocha* sp.			C						
22	*Austrolimnophila toxoneura* (O.S.)				Dn					
23	***Austrolimnophila unica* (Osten Sacken)**							**Gd**		
24	*Cheilotrichia (Empeda) stigmatica* (O.S.)						F	Gn		I
25	*Dicranomyia distendens* Lundström							Gn		
26	*Dicranomyia frontalis* (Staeger)	A		C						
27	*Dicranomyia immodesta* Osten Sacken					E	F			
28	*Dicranomyia ponojensis* Lundström			C						
29	*Dicranophragma fuscovarium* (O. S.)			C		E	F	Gd,n		
30	*Eloeophila solstitialis* (Alex.)									I
31	*Elephantomyia westwoodi* Osten Sacken	A				E	F			I
32	*Epiphragma fasciapenne* (Say)	A	B	C	Dd,n	En		Gd,n		
33	*Erioptera (E.) septemtrionis* O. S.					E	F	Gn		I
34	*Erioptera (E.) chlorophylla* group						F			
35	*Erioptera (Mesocyphona) caliptera* Say				Dd	E	F	Gn		
36	*Euphylidorea adusta* (Osten Sacken)	A	B	C				Gd,n		
37	*Euphylidorea auripemis* (Alexander)					E	F	Gn		
38	*Euphylidorea platyphallus* (Alexander					E		Gn		
39	***Eutonia alleni* (Johnson)**	A								
40	*Geranomyia rostrata* (Say)			C						

Table 1. List of Crane Flies collected in Larose Forest - Continued.

Columns: **A** = 16 June 2006, BioBlitz, hand netting; **B** = 9 June 2007, BioBlitz, hand netting; **C** = 7 June 2009, hand netting; **D** = 11 June 2010, BioBlitz, hand netting by day (d) & black lighting at night (n); **E** = 15 June 2013, black lighting; **F** = 21 June 2014, black lighting; **G** = 3 June 2016, BioBlitz, hand netting, black lighting; **H** = 3 June 2017; **I** = 29 July 2017, black lighting. Species new to the Ottawa District are in **bold**.

		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	Limoniidae: Short-palped crane flies									
	Continued									
41	*Gonomyia bidentata* Alexander	A				E				
42	***Gonomyia currani* Alexander**				**Dd,n**					
43	*Gonomyia (G.) subcinerea* Osten Sacken						F	Gn		
44	***Gonomyia (Idiocerodes) kansensis* Alex.**				**Dd,n**	E				
45	*Gonomyia (Leiponeura) sulphurella* O.S.		B				F	Gn		
46	*Helius flavipes* (Macquart)			C				Gd,n		
47	*Hoplolabis armata* (Osten Sacken)				Dn			Gn		
48	*Idiocera blanda* (Osten Sacken)				Dn					
49	***Ilisia graphica* Osten Sacken**				**Dd**					I
50	***Limonia indigena* (Osten Sacken)**				**Dd**			Gn		
51	*Metalimnobia immatura* (Osten Sacken)						F			
52	*Metalimnobia solitaria* (Osten Sacken)					E	F	Gd		
53	*Molophilus forcipulus* (Osten Sacken)				Dd					
54	***Molophilus hirtipennis* (Osten Sacken)**				**Dn**		F	Gn		
55	*Molophilus pubipennis* (Osten Sacken)				Dn	E	F			
56	*Ormosia affinis* (Lundbeck)	A		C	Dd,n		F	Gd,n		
57	*Pilaria quadrata* (Osten Sacken)						F	Gd,n		
58	*Pilaria recondita* (Osten Sacken)	A						Gd		
59	*Pilaria tenuipes* (Say)					E		Gd,n		

Table 1. List of Crane Flies collected in Larose Forest - Continued.

Columns: **A** = 16 June 2006, BioBlitz, hand netting; **B** = 9 June 2007, BioBlitz, hand netting; **C** = 7 June 2009, hand netting; **D** = 11 June 2010, BioBlitz, hand netting by day (d) & black lighting at night (n); **E** = 15 June 2013, black lighting; **F** = 21 June 2014, black lighting; **G** = 3 June 2016, BioBlitz, hand netting, black lighting; **H** = 3 June 2017; **I** = 29 July 2017, black lighting. Species new to the Ottawa District are in **bold**.

		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	Limoniidae: Short-palped crane flies									
	Continued									
60	*Prionolabis rufibasis* (Osten Sacken)		B					Gd,n	H	
61	*Pseudolimnophila contempta*				Dn					
62	*Pseudolimnophila inornata* (O. S.)			C				Gd,n		
63	*Pseudolimnophila luteipennis* (O. S.)			C				Gd,n		
64	*Pseudolimnophila noveboracensis* (Alex.)									I
65	*Rhipidia fidelis* Osten Sacken							Gn		
66	*Rhipidia maculata* Meigen							Gn		
67	*Shannonomyia lenta* (Osten Sacken)	A		C	Dd	E	F	Gd,n		I
68	*Symplecta cana* (Walker)						F	Gn		
	Pediciidae: Predacious crane flies									
69	*Tricyphona calcar* (Osten Sacken)							Gn		
70	*Tricyphona inconstans* (Osten Sacken)						F			
71	*Tricyphona johnsoni* Alexander				D			G d		
72	*Ula elegans* Osten Sacken						F	G n		
	Cylindrotomidae: Leaf and moss-eating crane flies									
73	*Phalacrocera tipulina* Osten Sacken								H	
73	**Number of species**	**14**	**11**	**15**	**23**	**18**	**23**	**38**	**4**	**8**

Wolf Moon

Linda Jeays

You remember…
nights of uncertain darkness
in northern forests,
when the tortured lattice
of skeletal branches
splits the desolate moon
into panes of shattered glass
and fear is almost tangible.

City dweller, ages after,
you recognize the eerie blue glaze
on midnight snow seen through
a bedroom window as, breath held,
you silently prowl your territory
alerted by imaginary footsteps
and half-forgotten sounds
of movements in tangled brush.

Those early predatory hours of morning
you feel like trapped prey, no escape
as you shoulder down beneath
rough bed covers, only partly satisfied
your pack is safe, and barely suppressing
a fierce desire to howl at the moon.

January's full moon was called the Wolf Moon by some indigenous peoples. This was the time of the year that hungry wolves howled outside the villages.

More than Just a Flock!

Ann MacKenzie

Oshawa-based murder mystery writer, Steve Burrows, uses the collective nouns for birds as the titles for his books. To date he has written *A Siege of Bitterns*, *A Pitying of Doves*, *A Cast of Falcons* and, his latest, *A Shimmer of Hummingbirds*. It is a delightful way to catch us birders into his web of murder and mayhem in Norfolk, England. Chief Detective Inspector Domenic Jejeune is from Montreal, lending a Canadian touch to the stories. Burrows' knowledge of birding worldwide is quite evident in the books. Raised in England until grammar school when his family moved to Canada, he got started in birding at a young age. For several years he was the leading editor of the *Hong Kong Bird Watching Society* magazine. I heard him give a talk at the Huron Fringe Festival in May this year. I have enjoyed his books, and his titles got me looking into the names of groups of birds.

So how many bird collectives do you know? There seems to be a lot of flexibility regarding what large flocks of a species are called. Some terms are used for several species, such as Flotilla for both frigatebirds and gulls. Crows can be a Murder, a Congress, a Horde, a Muster, or a Cauldron. Sparrows can be a Host, a Quarrel, a Knot, a Flutter or a Crew. This terminology can be great fun and often depicts a characteristic of the bird. A Race or A Marathon of Roadrunners – seems evident, doesn't it? See if you can match the description on the left with the correct bird on the right. The two columns are in opposite alphabetical order. It might remind you of exercises you did in the younger grades but there are no pass/fail marks for this, just amusement! (Answers on page 58.)

1. A Bouquet of	a) Wren
2. A Chattering of	b) Vultures
3. A Chime of	c) Swans
4. A Committee of	d) Swallows
5. A Convocation of	e) Starlings
6. A Cover of	f) Quail
7. A Flush of	g) Pheasants
8. A Gulp of	h) Phalaropes
9. A Pandemonium of	i) Pelicans
10. A Regatta of	j) Parrots
11. A Spiral of	k) Nightingales
12. A Squadron of	l) Finches
13. A Trembling of	m) Eagles
14. A Vatican of	n) Crossbills
15. A Warp of	o) Creepers
16. A Watch of	p) Coots
17. A Whirligig of	q) Cardinals

... and what about these? Different answers are possible.

A _____
of Dowitchers

A _____
of Terns

A _____
of Skimmers

An _____
of Avocets

A _____
of Ducks

All photos by Gord Belyea.

Answers on next page

More than Just a Flock! ANSWERS

The correct order of the birds to match the collective is:

1-g: A Bouquet of Pheasants
2-e: A Chattering of Starlings
3-a: A Chime of Wren
4-b: A Committee of Vultures
5-m: A Convocation of Eagles
6-p: A Cover of Coots
7-f: A Flush of Quail
8-d: A Gulp of Swallows
9-j: A Pandemonium of Parrots
10-c: A Regatta of Swans
11-o: A Spiral of Creepers
12-i: A Squadron of Pelicans
13-l: A Trembling of Finches
14-q: A Vatican of Cardinals
15-n: A Warp of Crossbills
16-k: A Watch of Nightingales
17-h: A Whirligig of Phalaropes

Photos: Possible answers:

A Bind of Dowitchers
A Cotillion (or Ternery) of Terns
A Scoop of Skimmers
An Orchestra of Avocets
A Paddle (or Paddling, Flush, Raft, Team) of Ducks

Detail of the "Cotillion of Terns" photo by Gord Belyea.

OFNC
Awards Night

Saturday, February 24, 2018
7:00 p.m.
St. Basil's Parish Church,
940 Rex Avenue, Ottawa

(GPS Address: 899 Maitland Avenue)
This is on the east side of Maitland Ave., 200 m north of the Queensway.
Or take bus # 85 (along Carling Ave.) and get off at Maitland Ave. Walk 500 m south along Maitland (towards the Queensway). St. Basil's is on the left (east side).

- Celebrate this year's award winners.
- Wine & Cheese Social: enjoy wines, non-alcoholic punch, cheese & crackers, fruits & vegetables, desserts, tea & coffee.
- Take part in our Despotic Nature Quiz.
- Bid on silent auction items. To donate natural history-themed items for auction, call Elizabeth at (613) 761-9823.
- **Digital Photo Contest:** Please send up to 3 images to ofncphotocontest@wray-canada.com by February 10, 2018. Photos should be taken by you in Ontario or Quebec, and nature-themed. There will be small prizes; you have to be present to win.
- We invite Macoun Field Club members and children (under 18 years) to bring and present natural history displays.
- **ADMISSION: Free**

Coming Events

PLEASE NOTE:

The OFNC website (*ofnc.ca*) contains the most up-to-date information on events. Please check it regularly for additions or changes to events. The Club's Facebook page (*www.facebook.com/groups/379992938552/*) and Twitter account (*@OttawaFieldNat*) may also be used to announce last-minute changes to events.

Several events require participants to register. Please consult the details in the event description.

We expect to have several more events to offer that could not be finalized prior to the publication deadline for *Trail & Landscape*. These will be announced as soon as possible on the website. Other weather- and year-dependent events can only be announced at the last minute, via the website, Facebook and Twitter.

ALL OUTINGS:

Field trips to natural areas in our region and beyond take place all year round. OFNC events are for members only. Prospective members with interest in attending should contact the trip leader in advance. For some events, participation is limited and members will be given priority. All participants will be asked to sign a waiver. Times given for events are departure times. Please arrive earlier, as leaders start promptly. If you need a ride, please contact the leader.

Please bring a lunch on full-day trips and dress according to the weather forecast and activity. Please always wear long pants and closed-toe shoes. Binoculars and/or spotting scopes are essential on all birding trips. Unless otherwise stated, transportation will be by carpool.

MONTHLY MEETINGS:

Our monthly meetings are held in the K.W. Neatby Building, Salon B, at 960 Carling Avenue. There is ample free parking in the lot on the west side of Maple Drive by Carling Ave., immediately to the east of the main entrance to the Neatby Building. Monthly meetings are open to the general public.

EVENTS ORIENTED TO ALL AGES:

Kids are welcome on all of our trips. We highlight some hikes as "oriented to all ages" as these are most likely to be enjoyed by typical children. Depending on your child(ren)'s interests and stamina, please feel free to bring them along on any events. For events tailored to kids, check out the Macoun Field Club (*http://www.ofnc.ca/macoun/index.php*).

Monthly Meeting

139th ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

Tuesday January 9, 2018

7:00 p.m. Social

7:30 p.m. Formal program

Location: Fletcher Wildlife Garden Interpretive Centre

Description: The Board of Directors for 2018 will be elected at this meeting. There will be a brief review of the activities in 2017 and a statement of the Club's finances will be given. This is an opportunity to meet most of the Club's executives and the chairs of the various committees, and to find out what makes your Club tick.

Saturday January 13
9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

MUD LAKE ALL THE WAY AROUND

Leader: Bev McBride
Meet: Entrance to Britannia Conservation Area woods on Cassells St. (NW corner of the lake)
Description: We will hike all the way around Mud Lake and contemplate whatever items of natural history interest come to our attention. Warm, waterproof footwear recommended. It could be icy. Consider bringing a walking stick or trekking pole to assist with balance for where the lake drains into the Ottawa River.

Saturday January 27
8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

BIRDING IN THE BLEAK MID-WINTER – SEARCHING FOR LIFE ON THE RIDEAU RIVER

Leader: Greg Zbitnew
Meet: East side of the Rideau River, just under the Queensway (see description for parking)
Description: Birding is pretty much at its lowest ebb in late January-early February, but where there is running water, there is life. A number of spots on the Rideau River are open year-round, and this is a magnet for over-wintering ducks, including, we hope, Barrow's Goldeneye. The narrowness of the river virtually guarantees good views. Parts of the valley are surprisingly wild even when passing through a heavily urbanized area, and the combination of open water and the urban heat island can be favourable for passerines and associated birds of prey. We will meet on the east side of the Rideau River, just under the Queensway, at

8:00 a.m. This is a few 100 meters south of the South end of North River Road, where parking is available. To get there, go to the Vanier parkway from the 417, turn west on Queen Mary, and south (left) on North River Road. We will visit the open water and nearby woods here, the Rideau River at Donald Street (Adàwe Crossing), Billings Bridge, and if time and enthusiasm permit, Carleton University and places even farther south.
Expect a reasonable amount of walking on snow/ice and cold temperatures. The trip nominally will finish at 12 noon. In the event of inclement weather, which would be snow and or wind making travel difficult or severely hampering visibility, the trip will be rescheduled for February 3rd. Please pre-register by January 25 by email to bm.ofnevents@gmail.com.

Saturday January 27, 2018
7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.
oriented to all ages

5th ANNUAL MEMBERS' PHOTOGRAPHY NIGHT

Leaders: Barry Cottam and Hume Douglas
Location: K.W. Neatby Building, 960 Carling Avenue
Description: If you take natural history photos, this is your opportunity to share some of your images with fellow members. The mix of different topics and voices makes for an enjoyable evening. Contributions may be 7-10 minutes long. We can handle most digital presentations (images on a flash-drive), and even conventional slides (with some warning please). We encourage presenters to speak about their images. Please contact Hume Douglas (humedgl@gmail.com) or Barry Cottam (b.cottam@rogers.com) so that we can organize the presentations.

Sunday January 28
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

BIRDING ALTA VISTA

Leader: Richard Knapton
Meet: Billings Bridge Shopping Centre parking lot near the McDonald's
Description: Join Richard to explore for birds in Ottawa's Alta Vista neighbourhood. The area includes open corridors with wintering allotment gardens, wooded parks, neighbourhoods with fruit-bearing shrubs and trees and Rideau River frontage. Be prepared for walking and for keeping warm. Please pre-register by January 26 by email to bm.ofnevents@gmail.com.

Common Goldeneye, by Roy John.

Monthly Meeting

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY OF CANADA (NCC)

Tuesday February 13

7:00 p.m. Social

7:30 p.m. Formal program

Speaker: Dan Kraus, Senior Conservation Biologist, NCC

Location: Salon B, K.W. Neatby Building, Central Experimental Farm, 960 Carling Avenue

Description: Dan Kraus, Senior Conservation Biologist, will discuss the conservation efforts and challenges faced by the Nature Conservancy of Canada. (A more detailed synopsis will be available later on the club website, in the event listings.)

Monthly meetings are open to the general public.

Saturday February 24
9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

SNOWSHOEING ON THE CRAZY HORSE TRAIL

Leader: Jakob Mueller
Meet: 9:00 a.m. beside the Pizza Pizza in the northeast corner of the Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre parking lot (Richmond Road at Assaly Road) OR 9:30 a.m. at the intersection of Huntmar Drive and March Road.
Description: Get some exercise and explore nature in winter in west Ottawa. We will look for wildlife activity and take in winter landscapes and fresh air. Snowshoes will probably be necessary, based on a typical February snowpack; bring your own, or rent from one of the many sporting goods suppliers in Ottawa. Pack a lunch, a drink, and dress in layers. Please pre-register by February 22 by email to jm890_7@hotmail.com.

Saturday February 24
7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

OFNC AWARDS NIGHT

Location: St. Basil's Parish Church, 940 Rex Avenue, Ottawa. Enter from Maitland Avenue (east side) just north of the Queensway.
Description: Join us for some fun at our annual wine and cheese party and celebrate with the honoured winners of our Annual Awards. Photographers will exhibit their works for everyone to enjoy; the judged photo display will be digital only. Kids, bring your natural history displays.

See details on page 59.

Monthly Meeting

TURTLES ALL THE WAY DOWN

Tuesday March 13

7:00 p.m. Social

7:30 p.m. Formal program

Speaker: David Seburn

Location: Salon B, K.W. Neatby Building, Central Experimental Farm, 960 Carling Avenue

Description: Turtles are for the most part a gentle and attractive group of species, yet they are also one of the most endangered groups in Canada. Eight species of turtles occur in Ontario, and all but one, the Painted Turtle, are listed as species at risk. To help the conservation of turtles, the Canadian Wildlife Federation, in partnership with the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club, has begun work in the Ottawa area. David Seburn will discuss the threats turtles face and will provide an overview of activities from 2017. We conducted surveys to try and find new locations with the threatened Blanding's Turtle, as this will result in additional habitat protection for wetlands. We also conducted road surveys to identify areas with significant amounts of roadkill. And last but not least, we protected turtle nests to reduce nest predation by animals such as raccoons.

Monthly meetings are open to the general public.

Saturday March 17
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

BIRDING ALONG THE RIDEAU RIVER IN THE CITY

Leader: Richard Knapton
Meet: At the end of Somerset St. East, in Strathcona Park by the Adàwe Crossing
Description: Join Richard for late-winter birding along the Rideau River. Explore the river's open waters and adjacent parks and neighbourhoods for over-wintering and resident water and land species. Maybe we'll find some signs of spring! Please pre-register by March 15 by email to bm.ofnevents@gmail.com.

Monthly Meeting

COD COLLAPSE, CRUSTACEAN EXPLOSION: CHANGES IN CANADA'S ATLANTIC MARINE ECOSYSTEMS 1990-2015

Tuesday April 10

7:00 p.m. Social

7:30 p.m. Formal program

Speaker: Howard Powles

Monthly Meeting – Continued

Location: Salon B, K.W. Neatby Building, Central Experimental Farm, 960 Carling Avenue

Description: The collapse of Canada's Atlantic cod populations in the early 1990s led to their designation as "endangered", and threatened the well-being of fishing people and the existence of rural communities. Less well publicized was the concurrent "crustacean explosion", a big increase in populations of northern shrimp and snow crab which supported the highest values ever for Atlantic fisheries. Are the cod coming back? A story of massive ecosystem changes, out of sight below the surface of the sea.

Howard Powles has worked for more than 50 years on the biology of exploited marine populations and the dynamics of marine ecosystems, mostly for the government of Canada, and more recently as a member of the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) and of expert panels assessing fisheries for eco-certification.

Monthly meetings are open to the general public.

ANY ARTICLES FOR *TRAIL & LANDSCAPE?*

Have you been on an interesting field trip or made some unusual observations? Write up your thoughts and send them to *Trail & Landscape*!

DEADLINE: Material for the April-June issue must be in the editor's hands by **February 1, 2018**. Send your articles to:

Annie Bélair

annie.TandL@gmail.com

613-832-7802

Vous pouvez m'écrire en français également.

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